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QUEEN ELIZABETH I

How the last Tudor became history's greatest monarch

VIRGIN QUEEN?

Find out if Elizabeth was as innocent as she claimed...

Digital Edition

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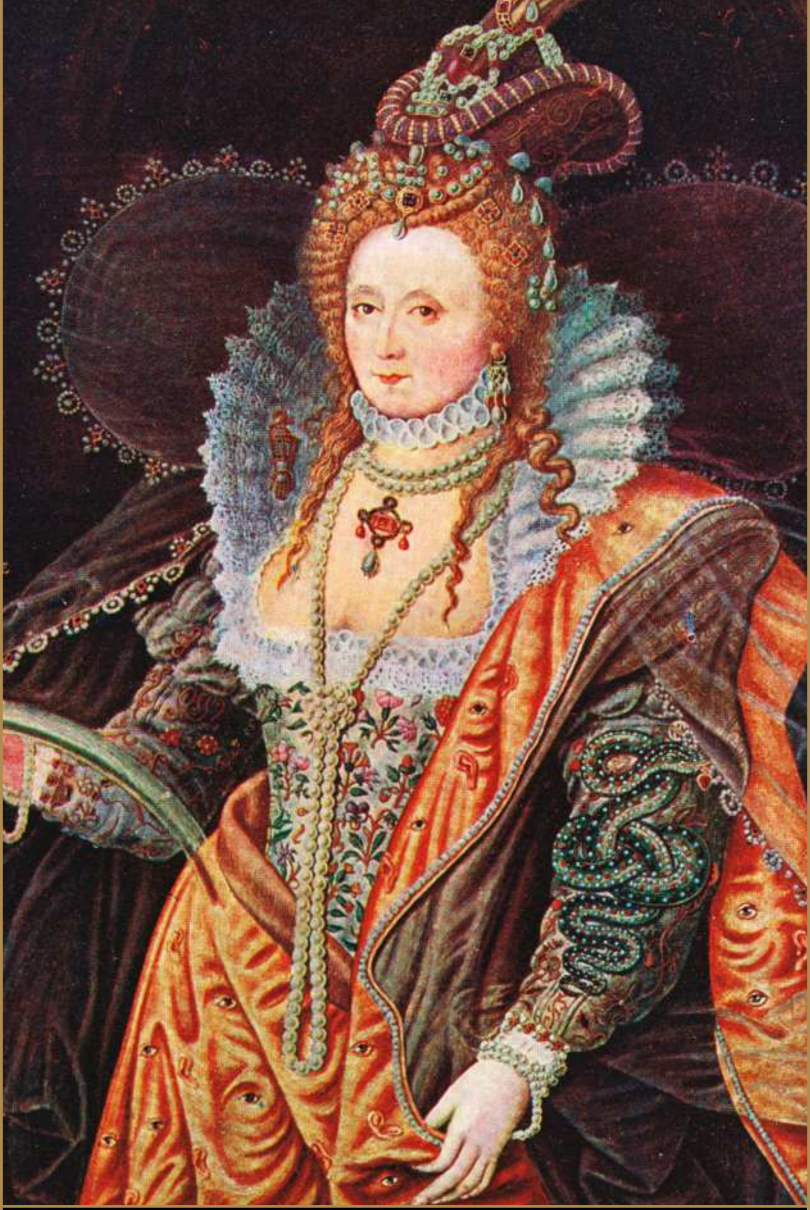

Welcome to
QUEEN ELIZABETH I

When Elizabeth I passed away in March 1603, her nation mourned the passing of their loyal and virtuous queen, but held their hopes high for her successor, King James VI of Scotland. In time, the optimism that came with the dawn of this new dynasty faded, and in its place came nostalgia for the Golden Age over which the Tudor queen had reigned. In the centuries that have passed, the legend of Gloriana has grown and she is championed as one of England's greatest monarchs, saving her country from the brink of invasion and remaining steadfastly dedicated to her people above any man. But in life, Queen Elizabeth I wasn't quite the saintly figure history cracks her up to be. Instead, her reign was defined by rebellion, rumours and scandal. In the Book of Elizabeth I, find out how she came inches from execution during her sister's reign, uncover the whispers of unworthy lovers that dogged her throughout her life and discover whether Elizabeth's religious policy was enough to calm Protestant and Catholic alike.

FUTURE

QUEEN ELIZABETH I

Future PLC Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA

Editorial
Editor **Philippa Grafton**
Compiled by **Sarah Bankes & Katy Stokes**
Senior Art Editor **Andy Downes**
Head of Art & Design **Greg Whitaker**
Editorial Director **Jon White**

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Commercial Director **Clare Dove**

International
Head of Print Licensing **Rachel Shaw**
licensing@futurenet.com
www.futurecontenthub.com

Circulation
Head of Newstrade **Tim Mathers**

Production
Head of Production **Mark Constance**
Production Project Manager **Matthew Eglinton**
Advertising Production Manager **Joanne Crosby**
Digital Editions Controller **Jason Hudson**
Production Managers **Keely Miller, Nola Cokely,**
Vivienne Calvert, Fran Twentyman

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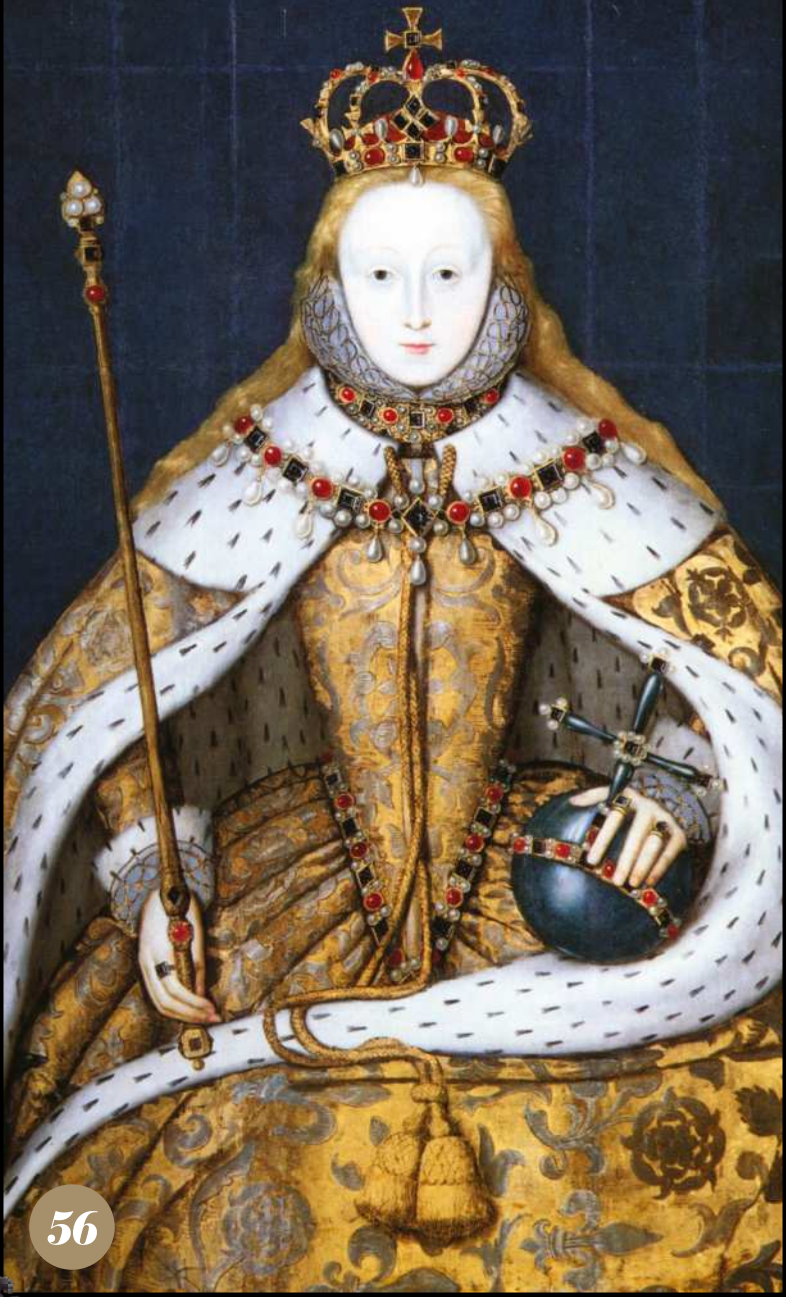

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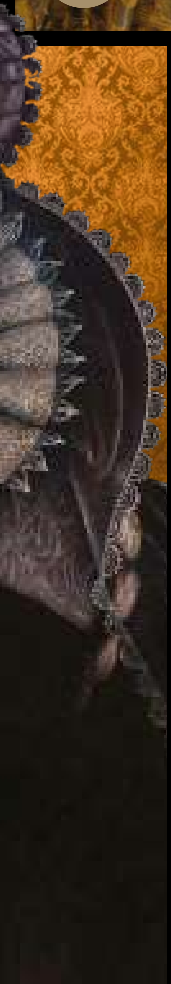

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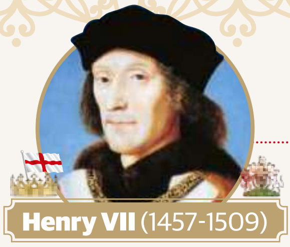
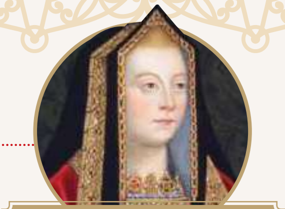
The Tudor family tree



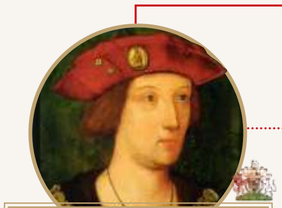
Henry VII (1457-1509)

Emerging as victor from the bloody Wars of the Roses, Henry Tudor quickly set about building a powerful dynasty, marrying his children into the royal families of France, Spain and Scotland. All of these relationships would be undone by his second son, but the last would bear unexpected fruit.



Elizabeth of York (1466-1503)

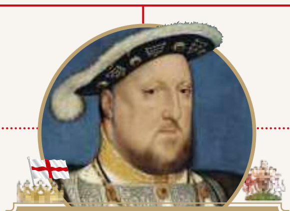
Daughter of Edward IV, niece of Richard III and sister to the 'Princes in the Tower', Elizabeth of York's royal lineage united the warring houses of York and Lancaster, giving Henry VII the royal legitimacy that he craved.



Arthur Tudor (1486-1502)

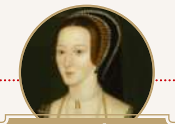
Groomed for greatness, the Tudor heir died aged 15 from a mysterious malady. His marriage to Catherine of Aragon was short-lived and – according to her, at least – unconsummated. Arthur's death placed his younger brother in line to the throne and broke Henry VII's heart.

Catherine of Aragon (1485-1536)



Henry VIII (1491-1547)

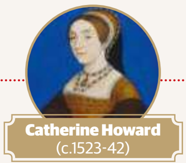
Arguably the most infamous of the Tudors, Henry VIII's desire for a male heir saw him break with Rome to marry six times, instigating not just a dynastic crisis but a religious one that would only grow more urgent under the reigns of his children.



Anne Boleyn (c.1501-36)

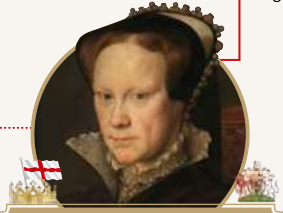
Jane Seymour (c.1508-37)

Anne of Cleves (1515-57)



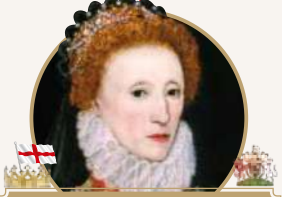
Catherine Howard (c.1523-42)

Philip II (1527-98)



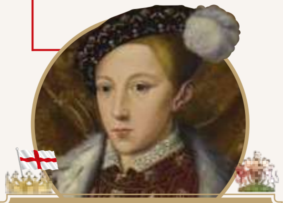
Mary I (1516-58)

Henry VIII's eldest daughter, Mary was monstered as 'Bloody Mary' by Protestants for her persecution of their faith and her marriage to Philip II of Spain, who ruled England with her as joint sovereign. Her death saw England break with Catholic Europe for the last time.



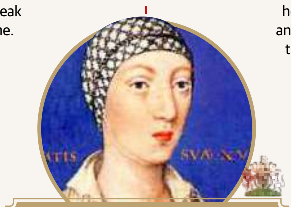
Elizabeth I (1533-1603)

The fifth and final crowned Tudor survived the machinations of her siblings to reign for 45 years, standing strong against the threat of invasion and establishing England as a colonial power. Despite her many suitors, she never married and died without a direct heir, passing the crown instead to the son of her archrival Mary, Queen of Scots.



Edward VI (1537-53)

Henry VIII's only surviving son became king at the age of nine. Fiercely anti-Catholic and staunchly Protestant, England was ruled in his name by a like-minded regency council who fashioned the Church of England in their image, pressing the infant monarch to disinherit his sisters and name Lady Jane Grey his successor before he died at 15.

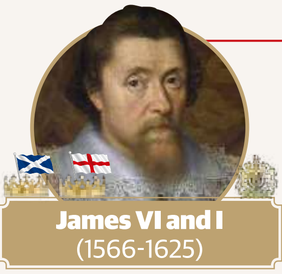


Henry FitzRoy (1519-36)

Henry VIII's only recognised bastard, the lack of male heir after 14 years marriage to Catherine of Aragon saw him raise Henry FitzRoy to a prestigious northern dukedom and give the young 'prince' numerous official duties. Unfortunately, he died aged 17, forcing Henry VIII to look elsewhere for a male heir.

James Hepburn (c.1534-78)

Henry Stuart (1545-67)

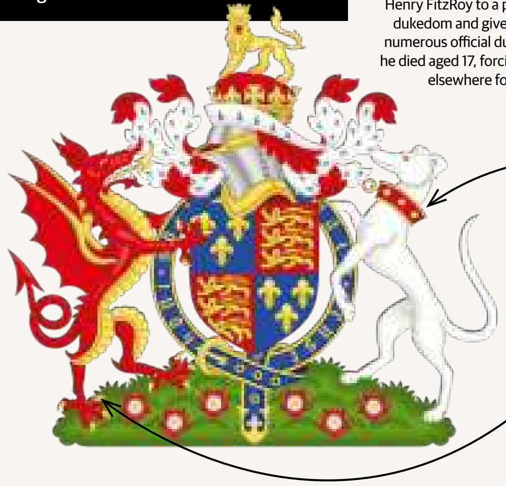


James VI and I (1566-1625)

With the death of Elizabeth I at the ripe old age of 69, James VI of Scotland accepted the crown of England as James I. The age of the Tudors had ended and a tumultuous new one was about to dawn for the whole of Great Britain.

The origin of the Tudors

The Tudors were a minor Welsh branch of the House of Lancaster that, through alliances, betrayals and naked opportunism, seized the crown of England from Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth. Well aware of how thin his claim to the throne was (his nearest royal antecedent was Edward III, his great-great-great grandfather), Henry VII emphasised the Tudor line's supposed descent from King Arthur, the mythical Iron Age ruler of the Britons.



Greyhound

The white greyhound was the symbol of the Honour of Richmond, a barony in North Yorkshire, which was willed to Henry VII and used to punctuate his claim over the remnants of the defeated House of York.

Dragon

The red dragon of Cadwaladr ap Cadwallon was first adopted by Owen Tudor, who claimed descent from the mythical Welsh king. Henry Tudor adopted the red dragon banner during the Wars of the Roses to add thunder to his claim.

For 118 years, the Tudor dynasty ruled England in a period of great change, an age of religious upheaval, insurrection, exploration and war. Discover how this family's complicated family ties shaped the British Isles and beyond

Key

········ *Family via marriage*

House of Tudor

English Crown

French Crown

—— *Family via blood*

House of Stuart

Scottish Crown

Spanish Crown

Catherine Parr
(1512-48)

Margaret Tudor
(1489-1541)

Married to the Stuart king James IV of Scotland, Margaret ruled as regent for her son following her husband's death at Flodden fighting the army of her brother Henry VIII. Margaret Tudor's descendents would eventually unite the crowns of England and Scotland.

James IV
(1473-1513)

Louis XII
(1462-1515)

Mary Tudor
(1496-1533)

Briefly married to the ageing French king Louis XII, Mary was conveyed home following her husband's death by Charles Brandon, 1st Duke of Suffolk. Breaking Henry VIII's trust, Mary and Brandon married in secret.

Charles Brandon
(c.1484-1545)

Mary of Guise
(1515-60)

James V
(1512-42)

Like his father before him, James V was defeated in battle by the army of his uncle Henry VIII, falling ill shortly afterwards and, as his father had done, leaving an infant to inherit the throne of Scotland. A stalwart defender of Catholicism and ally of France, James V persecuted Protestants and antagonised his uncle by claiming his title, Lord of Ireland.

Henry Grey
(1517-54)

Frances Brandon
(1517-59)

Married to Henry Grey, Duke of Suffolk, and mother of Lady Jane Grey, Frances was a canny political operator who parachuted her daughter into the inner circle of the young Edward VI. Following Jane's execution, she begged for the lives of her three remaining daughters and ended her life in near poverty under the watchful eye of Mary I.

Mary, Queen of Scots
(1542-87)

The French-educated Scottish queen ended her days a prisoner of her second cousin, Elizabeth I. Mary's claim to the English throne would be strengthened through her second husband (and first cousin) Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, who was also a descendant of Henry VII via their grandmother, Margaret Tudor.

Francis II
(1544-60)

Lady Jane Grey
(c.1537-54)

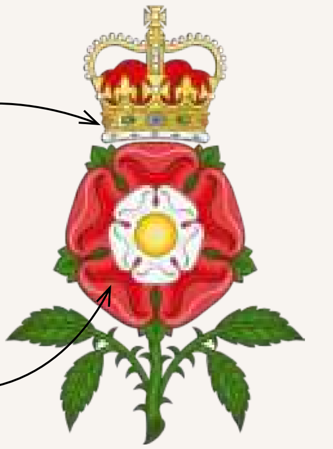
The 'Nine Day Queen' was named heir to the throne by the staunchly Protestant Edward VI fearing a Catholic resurgence under his eldest sister, Mary. As support for the most obvious heir – Henry VIII's eldest child – grew, Jane's supporters switched allegiances and she was executed for high treason.

Who were the Stuarts?

The House of Stewart (later Stuart) had ruled Scotland since 1371. Scotland had long borne the brunt of England's territorial ambitions and an opportunity for peace came with the ascension of Henry VII, who married his daughter to James IV, bringing the Stuarts into the English succession. That peace was short-lived and Henry VIII's reign began with an invasion of the north that saw his brother-in-law, James IV, killed, while his daughter, Elizabeth I, would have Mary, Queen of Scots, executed.

The Tudor legacy

Under the tumultuous Tudors, Wales became formally incorporated into England, the touchpaper was lit in Ireland by the declaration of Henry VIII as its king, and the seeds were sown for union with Scotland that would come to pass under the Stuarts. Most critically, the English Reformation begun under Henry VIII, accelerated by Edward VI, halted by Mary I and restarted by Elizabeth I transformed the culture of the island, created fault lines that still define the British Isles, and fractured England from much of the continent. For good and ill, the legacy of the Tudor dynasty is still felt today.



Crown

The Tudor Rose has been used as a royal badge by every English and British monarch since Henry VII. It's perhaps the most visible symbol of continuity, having survived the Stuarts, Hanoverians, and the modern royal family.

Rose

The white rose within the red symbolised the joining of the Houses of York and Lancaster under Henry VII. The red rose wasn't used as a symbol of the Lancastrian cause during the Wars of the Roses but was created later to add 'poetry'.

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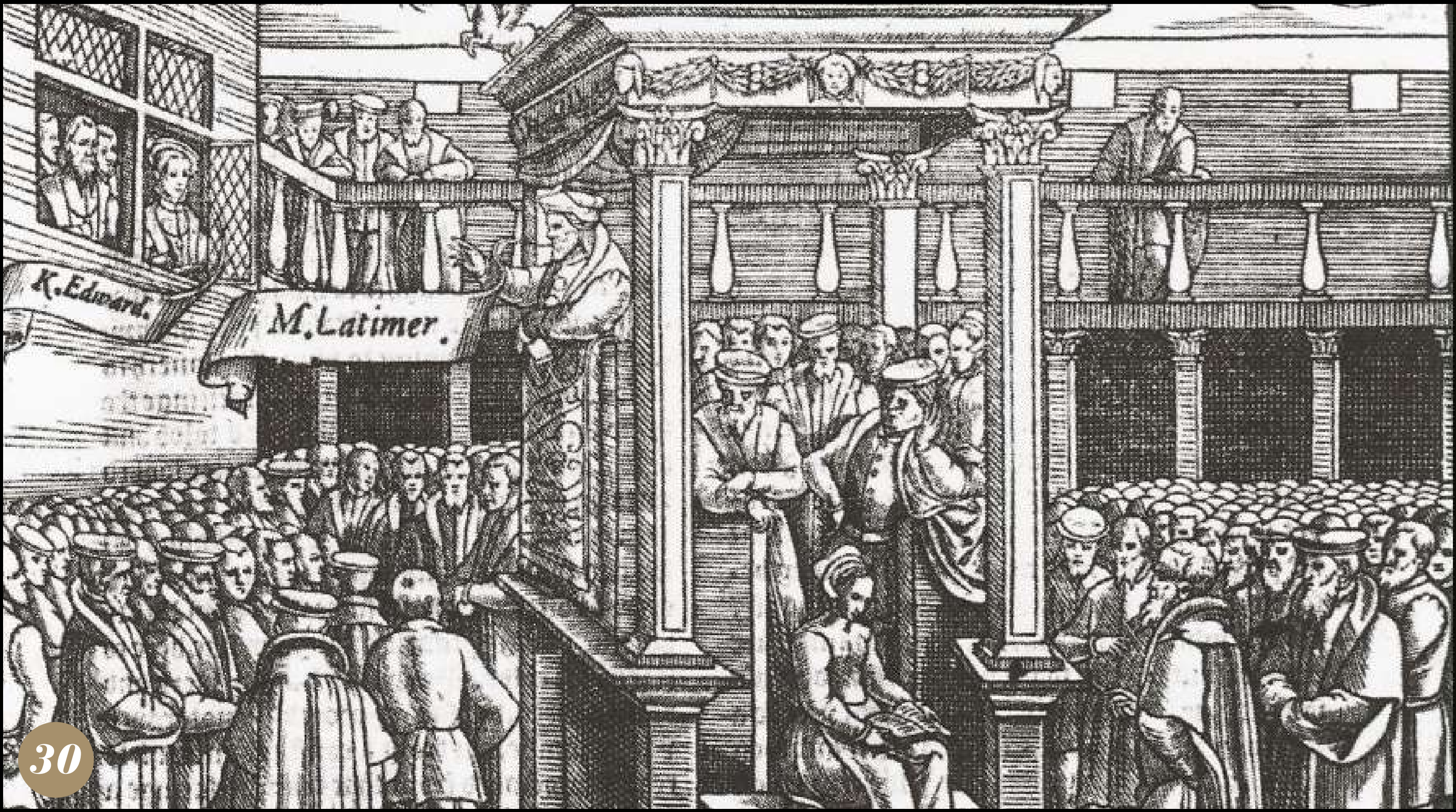

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Uncover the Family of Henry VIII, commissioned by his youngest daughter

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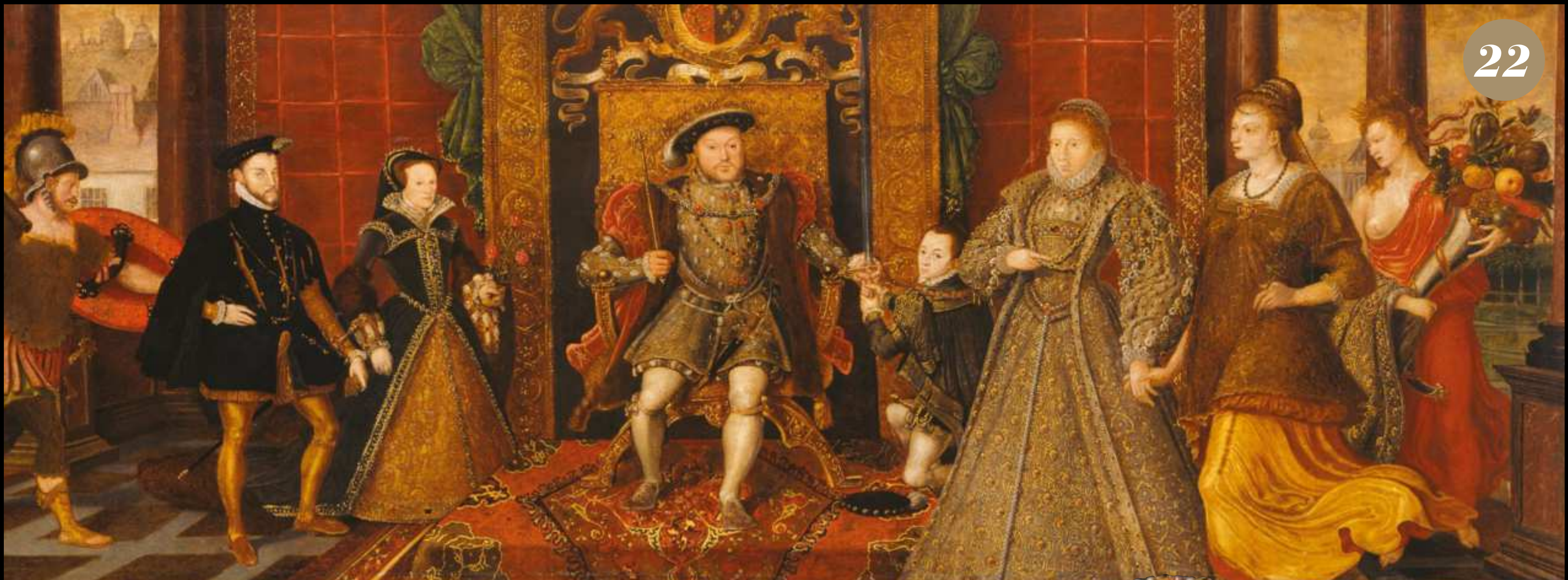
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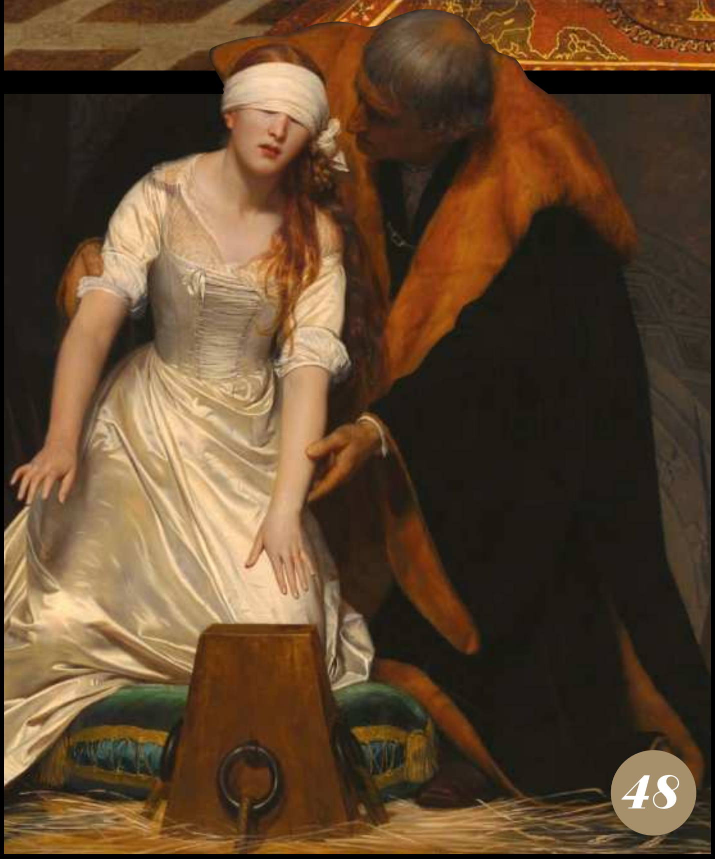
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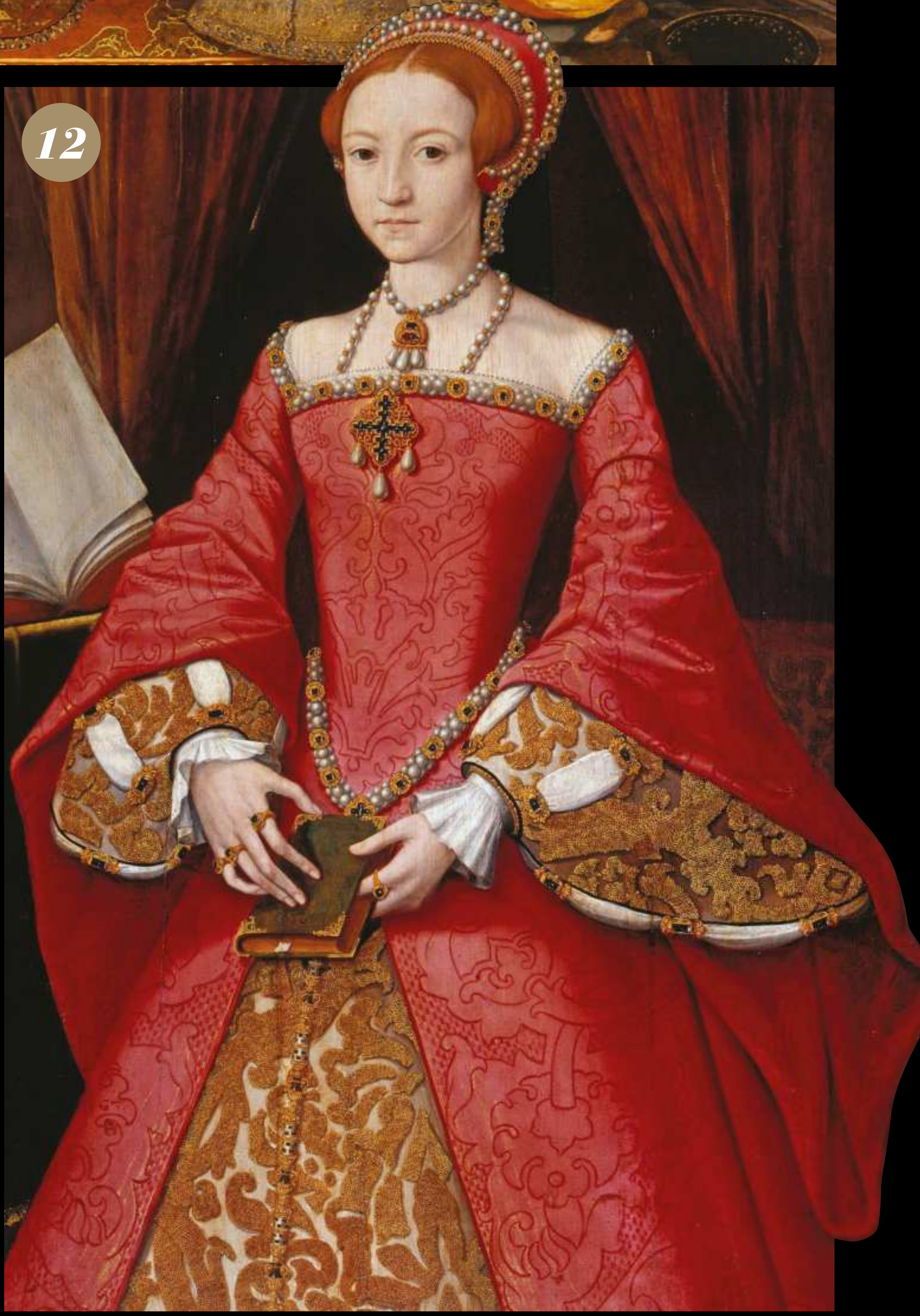
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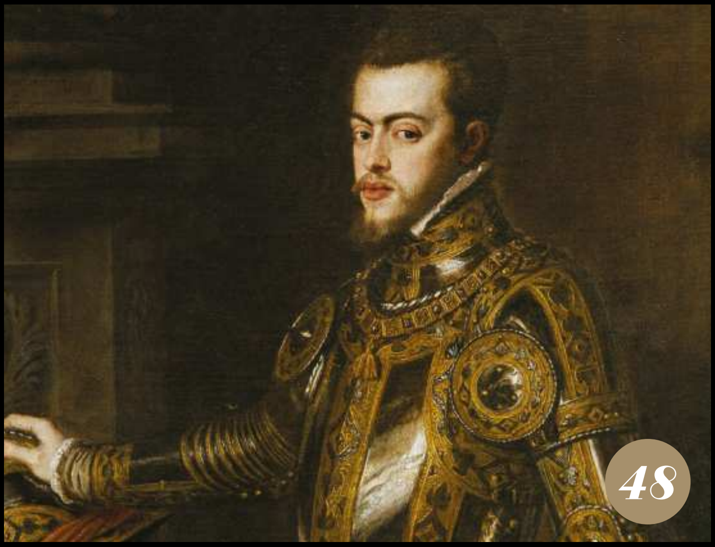
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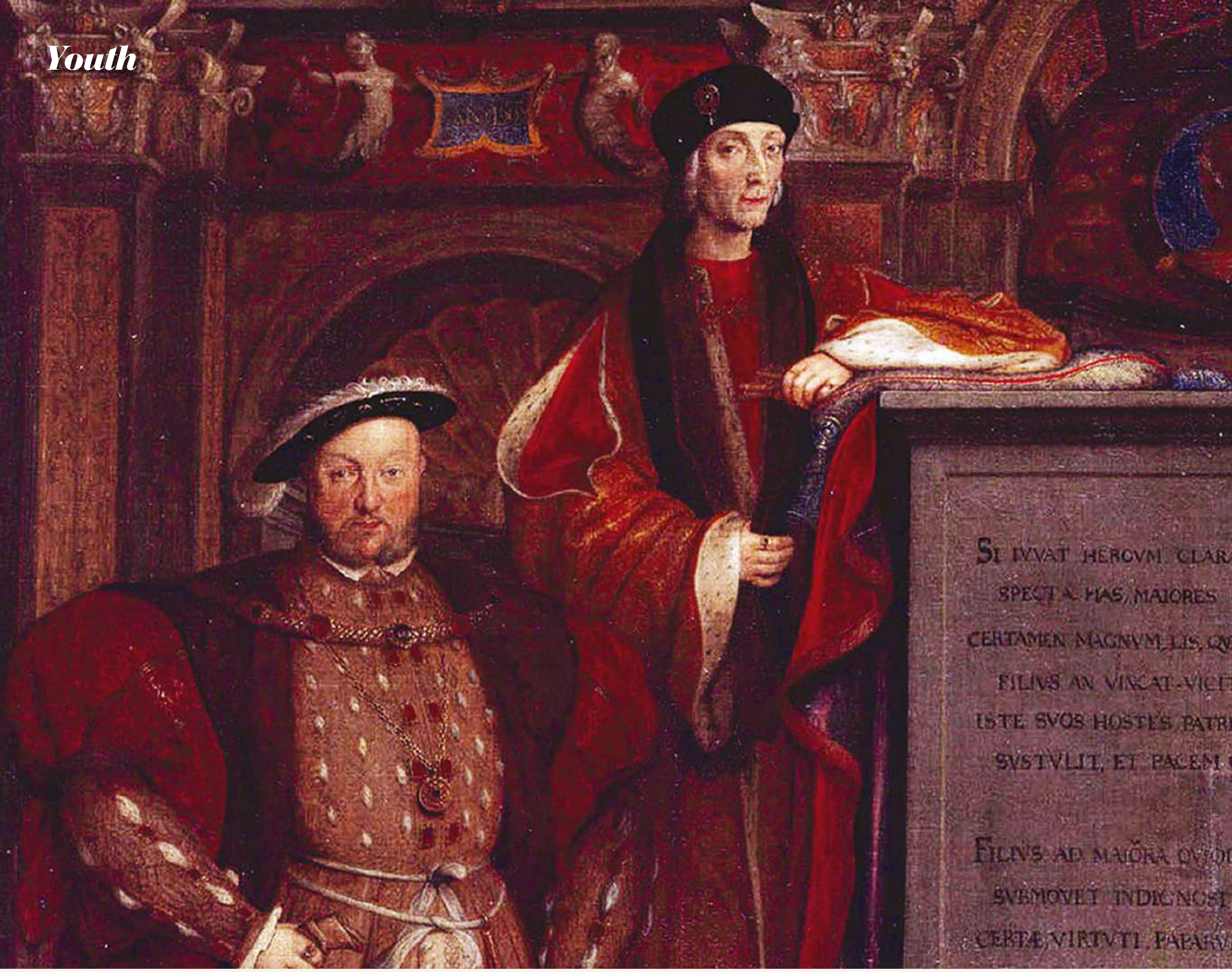
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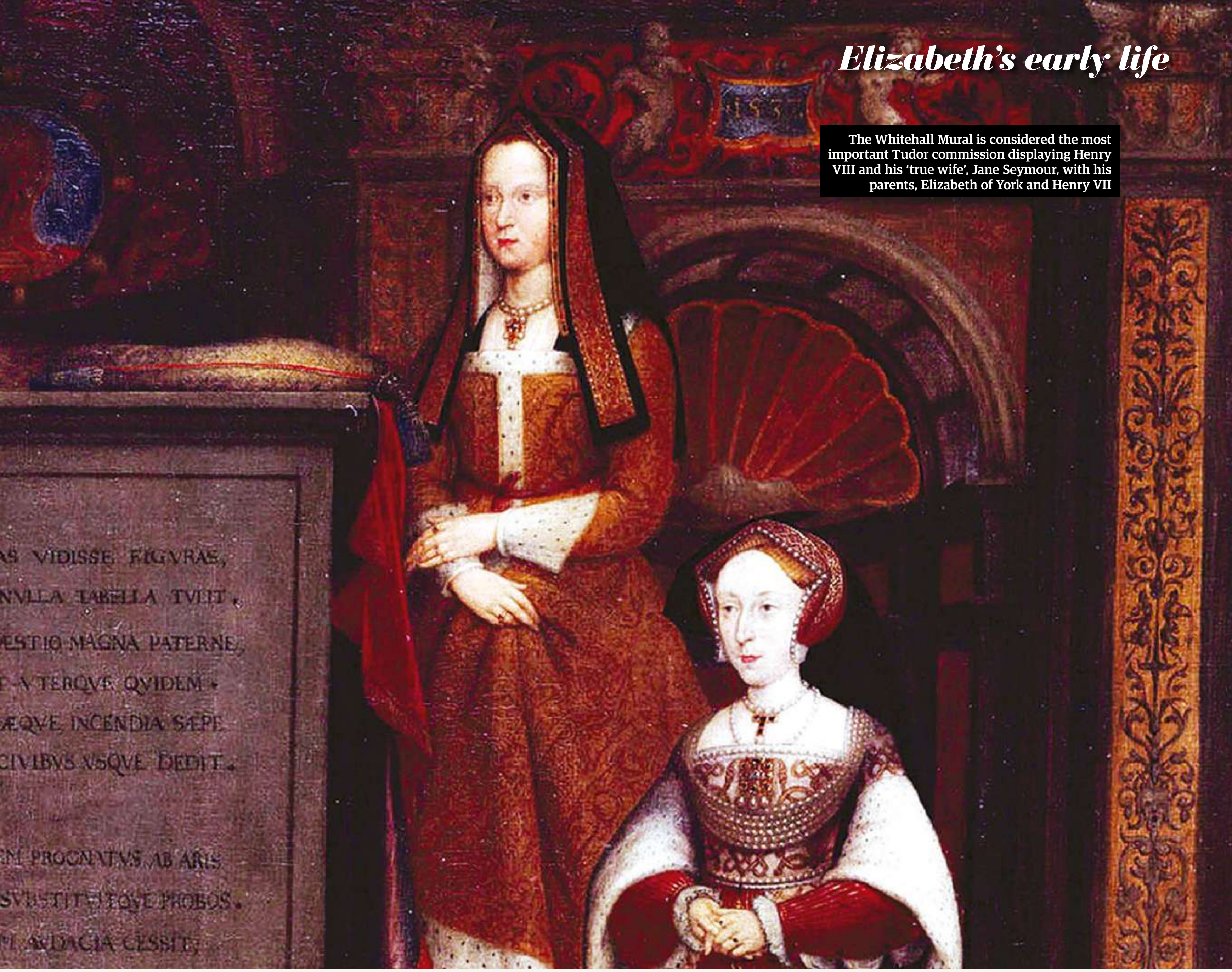
Elizabeth's early life

Born as heir to the throne, Elizabeth I's early life was overshadowed by her mother's execution and her subsequent illegitimacy

Written by Elizabeth Norton



The Whitehall Mural is considered the most important Tudor commission displaying Henry VIII and his 'true wife', Jane Seymour, with his parents, Elizabeth of York and Henry VII

Elizabeth's birth was one of the most anticipated of the 16th century, but her gender proved to be a great disappointment to her parents. While Elizabeth's infancy was one of royal opulence, the execution of her mother in 1536 led to the princess's exclusion from the succession and the royal family.

Queen Anne Boleyn ceremonially took to her chamber at Greenwich Palace on 26 August 1533, in order to await the birth of her first child. It was then customary for queens and other royal women to retire from court around a month before the expected birth, disappearing into a world of darkened rooms inhabited only by women. A set of ordinances, composed a few decades before, dictated how a queen was to behave during her confinement, as well as the furniture and decoration of the bedchamber. As well as a lavishly furnished bed, from which the queen could receive visitors, there was a smaller pallet bed on which she could give birth. Hangings covered the walls and windows of the room, with care taken to ensure that the images were plain patterns, calculated not to scare the expected infant. In preparation for the birth of a child that was confidently expected to be a boy, birth announcements for a 'prince' had already been prepared. At 3pm on 7 September 1533, Anne gave birth to a daughter. Henry VIII's reaction was to cancel the grand tournament that he had planned for the birth of his son.

By September 1533, Henry VIII had been king for over 24 years, but still lacked a son and heir. His first wife, Catherine of Aragon, had borne several children but only a daughter, Mary, had survived infancy. While Henry had considered making Mary his heir, including sending her to Ludlow as de facto Princess of Wales in 1525, in 1527 he decided instead to end his marriage and father sons with a new wife.

The catalyst for Henry's decision to end his marriage to Catherine was his relationship with Anne Boleyn. Anne was a gentleman's daughter, who had spent her early childhood in Norfolk and Kent, before taking up residence at the French court. While not a conventional beauty, she was graceful, intelligent and witty and, when she refused to become the king's mistress, he sought to make her his wife. Due to the opposition of Catherine's powerful nephew, the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, it had taken the couple nearly six years before they finally wed in secret in

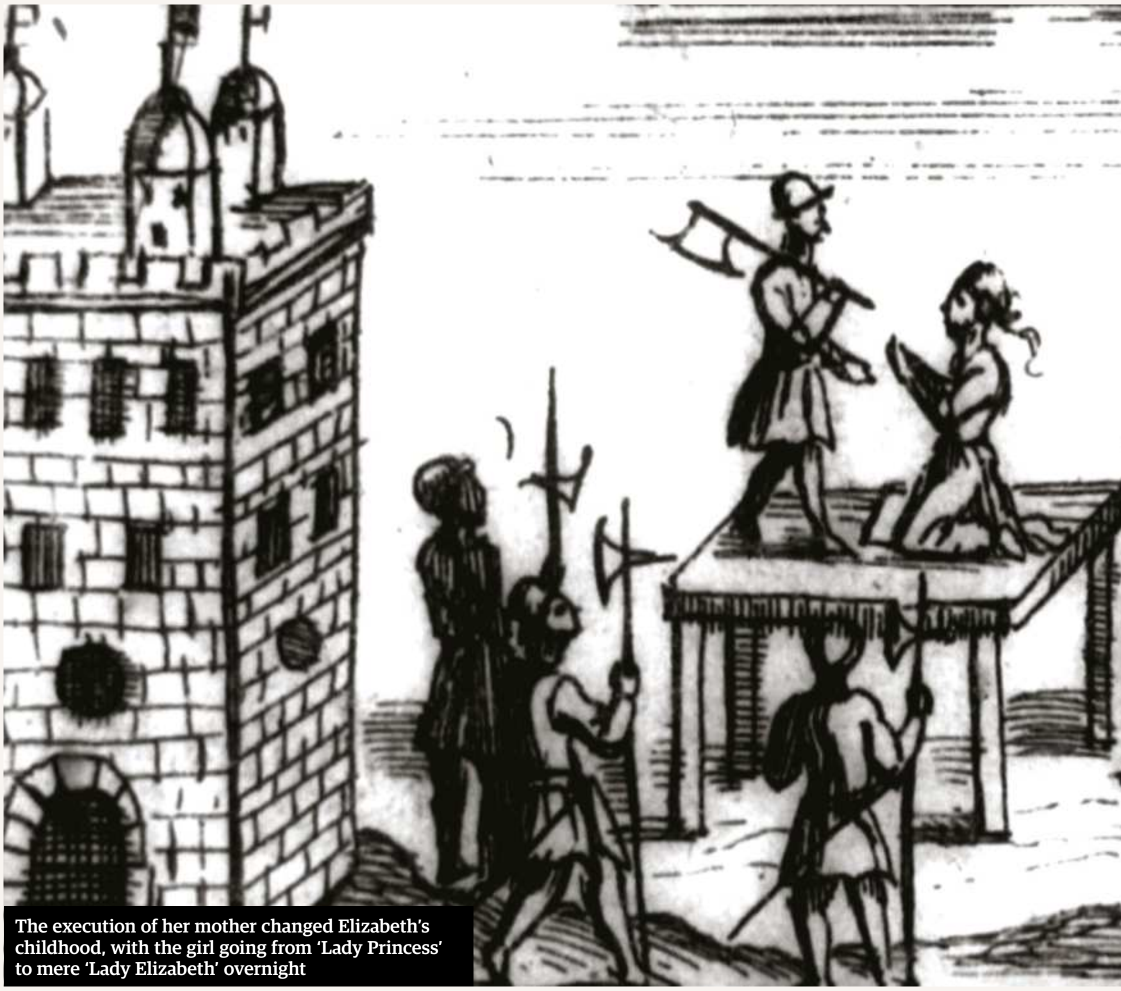
> "While not a conventional beauty, Anne was graceful, intelligent and witty and, when she refused to become the king's mistress, he sought to make her his wife"

January 1533. The bride, who was around 32 years old, was already pregnant. She loudly complained of a craving for apples, saying that the king had told her that this was a sign that she must be pregnant, but it was not until Easter that the marriage was made public. Anne was crowned as queen that summer to ensure that Henry's male heir was born to a consecrated mother and would be considered fully legitimate.

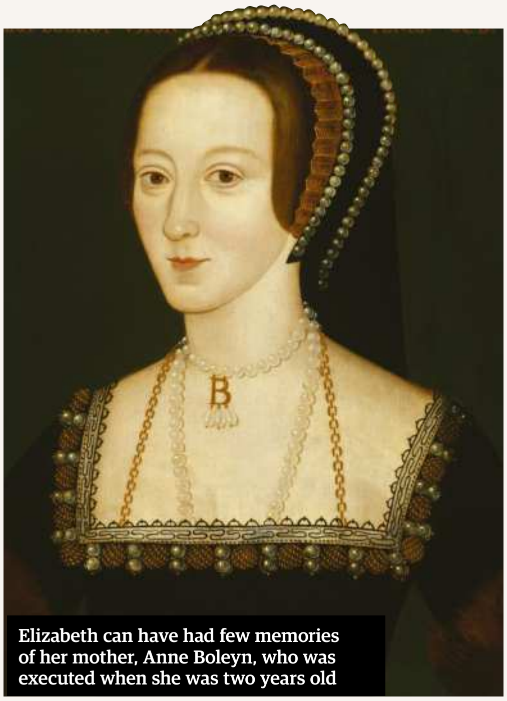
Although Henry was disappointed in his new daughter's sex, he could content himself with the fact that she was at least healthy and likely to be followed by brothers. She was given a grand christening, attended by much of the nobility and the chief citizens of London. Once named - for her grandmother, Queen Elizabeth of York - she was declared Princess of England and heiress presumptive, in preference to her elder half-sister who had been declared illegitimate.

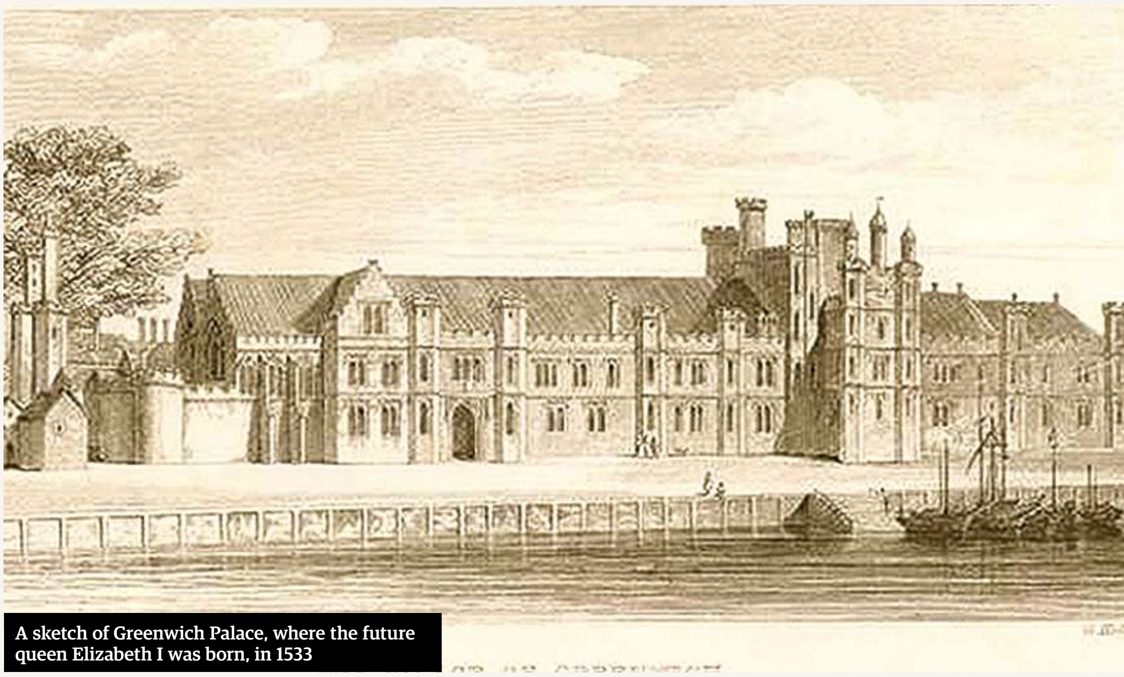
The Tudor royal court was a crowded, unhealthy place, with royal babies always raised in separate establishments outside the capital. In December 1533, therefore, Elizabeth was provided with her own princely household, leaving London in a stately procession for Hatfield - a palace in Hertfordshire, not far from the capital. She would spend much of her childhood at Hatfield, as well as at other palaces close to London, such as Eltham and Enfield. At Eltham, a suite of rooms was prepared for her, using some of the rooms of the queen's apartments. There, Elizabeth enjoyed her own private chapel, as well as a gallery for exercise on days when the weather was poor. She had glazed windows to keep out the cold, while the walls were decorated with soothing yellow ochre.

Anne was ambitious for her daughter, telling one of her chaplains, William Latymer, that she wanted Elizabeth to learn Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish and French, something which would stand


The execution of her mother changed Elizabeth's childhood, with the girl going from 'Lady Princess' to mere 'Lady Elizabeth' overnight

> "The Tudor royal court was a crowded, unhealthy place, with royal babies always raised in separate establishments"


Elizabeth can have had few memories of her mother, Anne Boleyn, who was executed when she was two years old


A sketch of Greenwich Palace, where the future queen Elizabeth I was born, in 1533

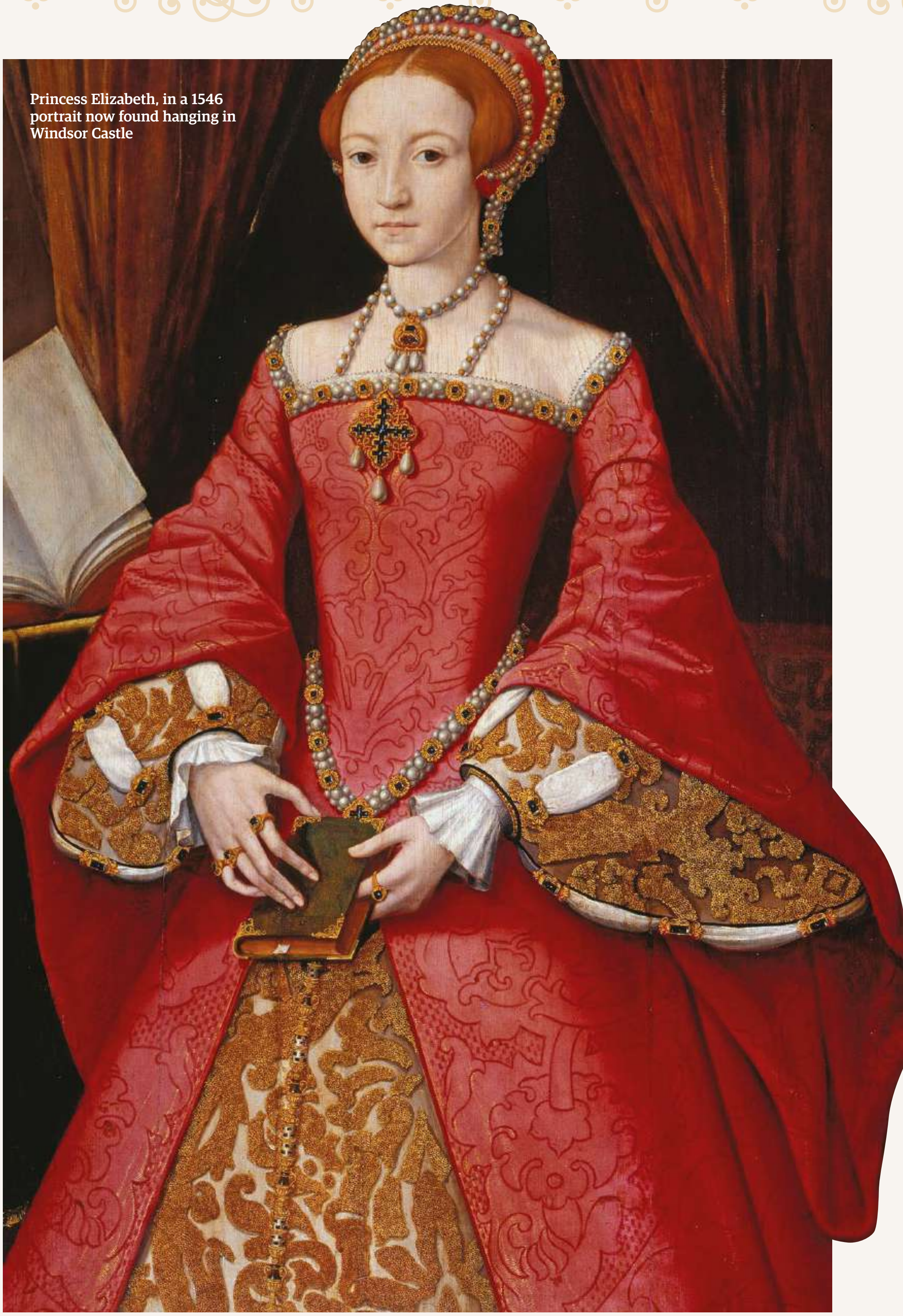
her in good stead for her likely future as the bride of a foreign prince. Other sources claimed that the queen insisted on keeping Elizabeth with her when she was at court, with the infant sat on a cushion placed at her mother's feet.

Nonetheless, although Elizabeth's mother visited her regularly and supervised her early education, the princess's day to day care was administered by a household of servants. Her lady mistress – who was in overall charge of the household – was Lady Bryan, Anne Boleyn's aunt and an experienced royal official who had previously served Princess Mary. A wetnurse was also employed, as were servants to rock the baby's cradle and soothe her to sleep. One of Elizabeth's rockers, Blanche Parry, would remain with her charge until her death in 1590, nearly 60 years later.

Both Anne and Henry supervised the establishment, with Elizabeth's parents consulted in October 1535 when it was agreed that she would be fully weaned. Anne also purchased clothes for her daughter, including sleeves of purple satin and velvet dresses.

The princess visited the royal court on occasion. She was there in January 1536 when Henry received word that his hated first wife, Catherine of Aragon, had died. The following Sunday Henry, Anne and their two year old daughter went ceremonially to mass dressed in celebratory yellow. Appearing 'like one transported with joy', Henry carried Elizabeth in his arms, showing her off while the ladies of the court danced. He kept Elizabeth with him for the next few days, displaying her to the court as he celebrated his first wife's death. The queen, too, had cause to celebrate, since she was then visibly pregnant. Disaster struck on the day of Catherine of Aragon's funeral when Anne miscarried a male child. On visiting his wife, Henry said that they would speak when she had recovered, complaining that he could see that 'he would have no more boys by her'.

From early infancy, it is clear that Elizabeth was considered a promising child. At one visit, by her parents, in April 1534, it was recorded that the red-haired baby was "a goodly child as hath been seen, and her Grace is much in the King's favour as a goodly child should be". Although it is recorded that she suffered with teething, the baby was otherwise healthy. She was not, however, the son for which



Princess Elizabeth, in a 1546 portrait now found hanging in Windsor Castle

Mary and Elizabeth

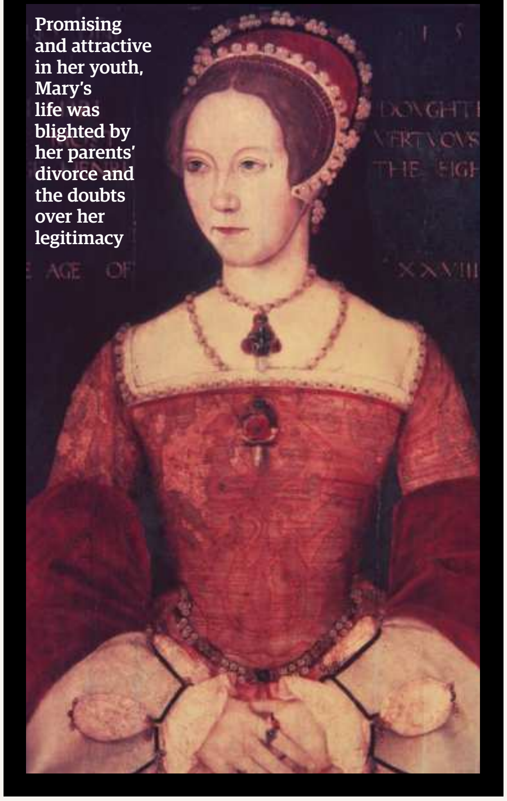
The sibling rivalry that divided the nation

Princess Mary was 17 years older than her half-sister. Although, for much of her childhood, she had been acknowledged as the heir to the throne, she was declared illegitimate in 1533. Henry VIII sent her to serve Elizabeth in December 1533. On arriving in the household, Mary refused to pay her respects to the new 'princess', replying that "she knew no other Princess in England except herself".

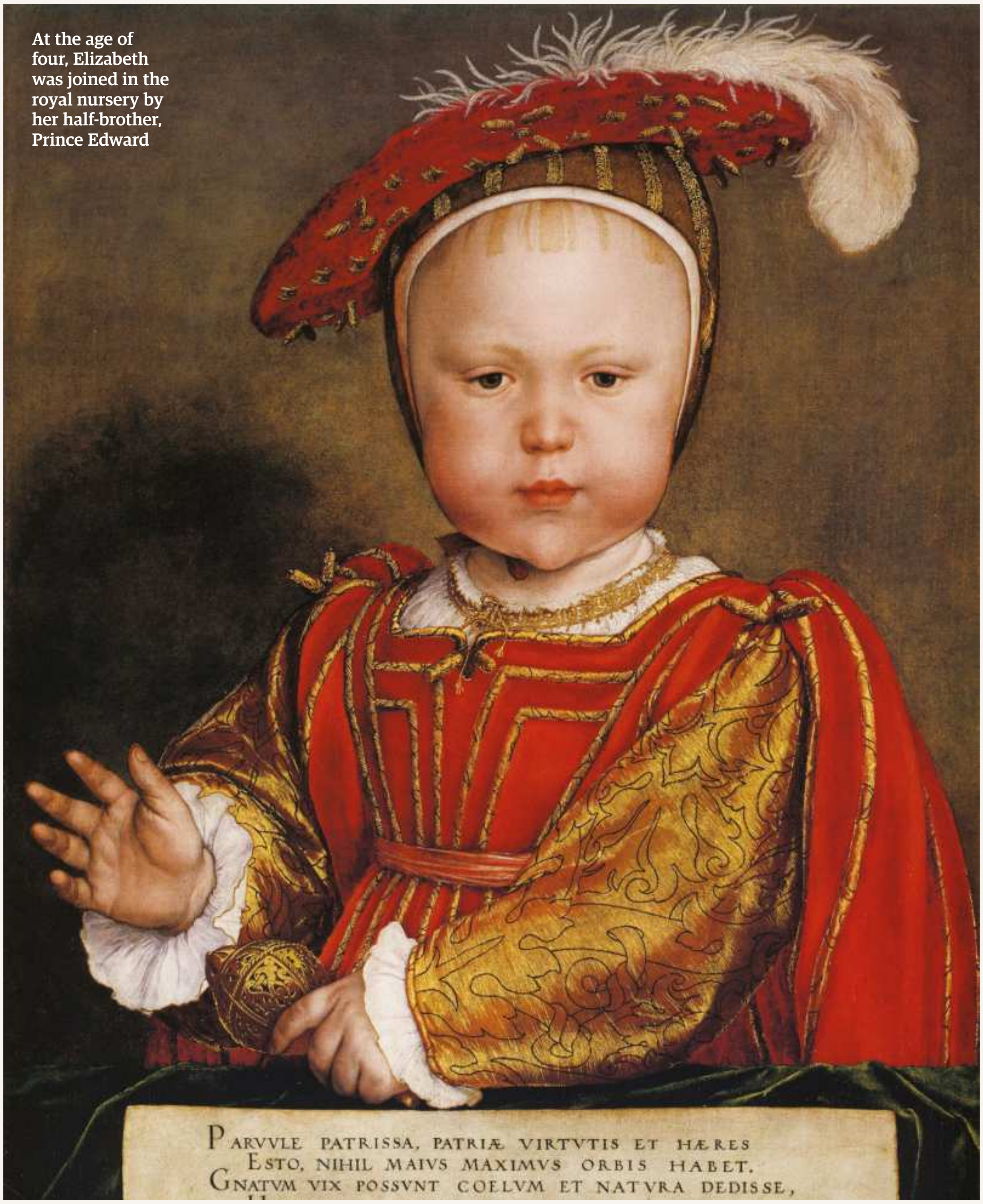
As a mark of her lower status, Mary rode in a leather litter when the household changed residences, while Elizabeth's was made of velvet. Mary was also forced to eat her meals in the hall with the other members of the household, while her younger half-sister was served in her apartments.

Mary took pity on Elizabeth following Anne Boleyn's execution, with the pair continuing to share a household. She found her younger sister to be a 'toward' child, writing to praise her to Henry VIII. The sisters were often together during their father's reign, as well as writing affectionately when apart.

The religious gulf between the Catholic Mary and the Protestant Elizabeth drove a wedge between them during Edward VI's reign. The ill feeling continued into Mary's time as queen.



Promising and attractive in her youth, Mary's life was blighted by her parents' divorce and the doubts over her legitimacy


PARVVLE PATRISSA, PATRIÆ VIRTVTIS ET HÆRES
ESTO, NIHIL MAIVS MAXIMVS ORBIS HABET.
GNATVM VIX POSSVNT COELVM ET NATVRA DEDISSE,

At the age of four, Elizabeth was joined in the royal nursery by her half-brother, Prince Edward

Henry had declared himself head of the Church of England and had broken faith with the Pope – measures that he had taken to enable him to wed Anne Boleyn. The relationship between King Henry VIII and his second wife had begun to deteriorate within just a few short months of their marriage on 25 January 1533. The couple publicly quarrelled at court and the king openly took mistresses from the royal court.

In April 1536 Elizabeth was in the garden at Greenwich when her mother held her up to her father as he looked out of an open window in the palace above. This was Anne's last attempt to reawaken Henry's love for her – and it failed utterly. While, for Anne, the young Elizabeth was the proof that she could bear a healthy child, for Henry she was only evidence of failure. Angry words were spoken between the couple and Anne then moved away defeated. It was probably the last time that she ever saw her daughter.

On 1 May the royal couple attended jousts at Greenwich Palace when the king suddenly got to his feet and walked away. The next day, Anne was arrested and sent to the Tower of London, accused of adultery with five men, including her own brother. After her conviction, Henry annulled his marriage. Anne, who joked that she would be known as 'Queen Anne Lack-Head', probably noted the irony that she was to be executed for adultery when, legally, she had never been married at all. This did not save her. She was executed on trumped-up charges on 19 May 1536.

Her mother's execution changed Elizabeth's life immediately, as the two-year-old princess noticed, commenting, "How haps it, Governor, yesterday my Lady Princess, and today but my Lady Elizabeth?". Soon, she had outgrown all her clothes, with Lady Bryan forced to petition the king's chief minister for replacements. She was declared illegitimate and excluded from the succession.

In October 1537 she was also supplanted in Lady Bryan's affections with the arrival of a new half-brother - the son of Henry VIII's third wife, Jane Seymour. The two children, who were four years apart in age, soon became close, with Prince Edward later calling Elizabeth his 'sweet sister temperance'. The new baby was as precocious as his half-sister. Lady Bryan noted that, when he was 17 months old, he could tap his tiny feet to music, enjoying himself so much that 'he could not be still'. He would also take the instruments from the musicians that entertained the royal children, attempting to pick out his own tunes. The two siblings were largely raised together until the fateful summer of 1544, when Henry VIII determined that it was time for his six-year-old son to leave the company of women and be taught and raised by male scholars.

> "Elizabeth was legally illegitimate and had little contact with her father in the years after Anne's death"

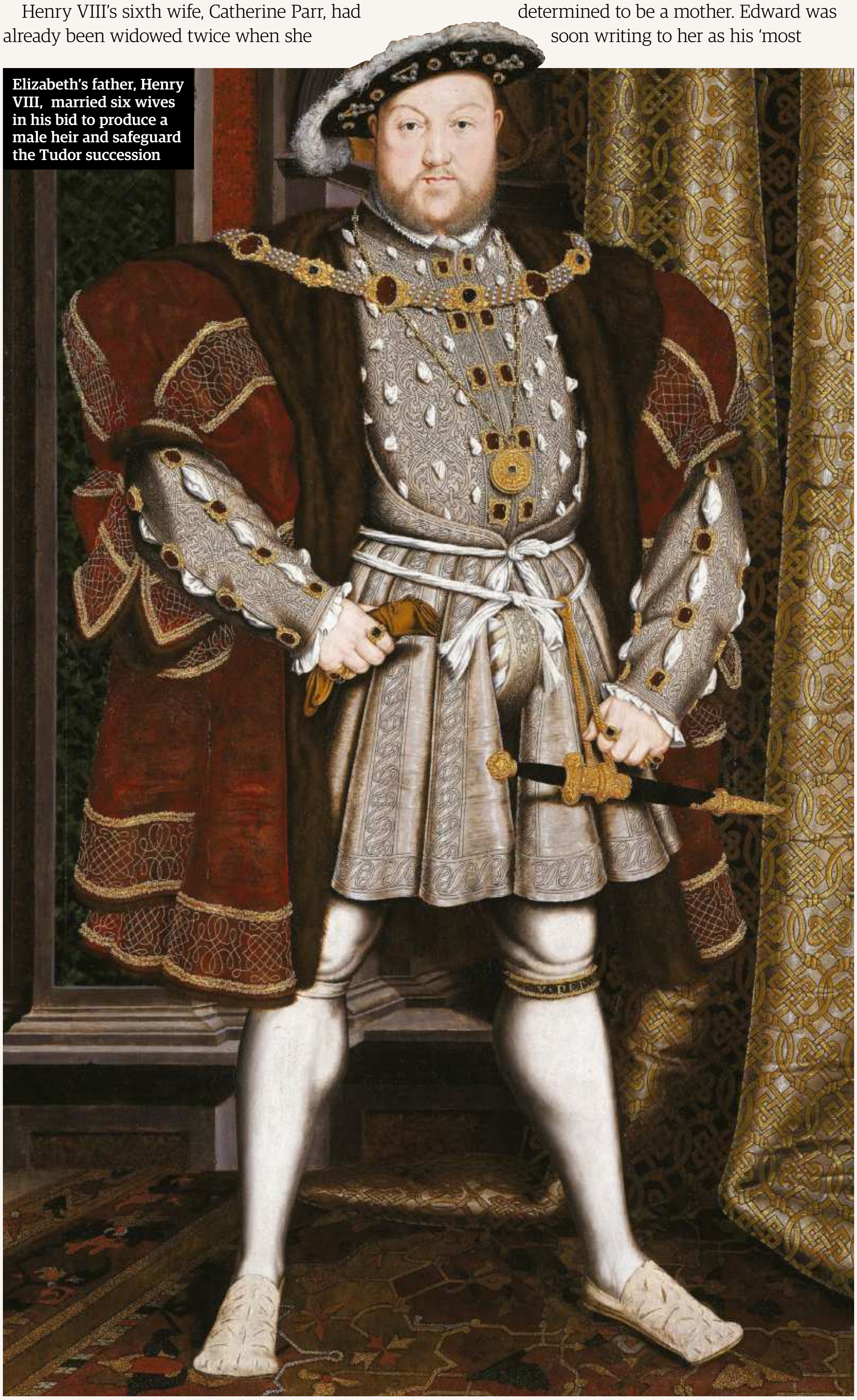
Lady Bryan was approaching 60 in 1537 when she took charge of Edward. Although she would live to a ripe old age, she could not continue raising the royal children indefinitely. Within a few years of Edward's birth, she had retired to Essex, with her place taken by a new lady mistress promoted from within the household.

Blanche, Lady Troy, had entered Elizabeth's service at the time of her birth and, as a widow, was able to devote herself to the princess's upbringing. She remained as lady mistress until her retirement in late 1546, with Elizabeth diligently paying her pension of half her previous salary until her death 11 years later.

Elizabeth's servants provided continuity in what was to be a troubled early life. Appointments were long-term: of the 32 people known to have served her when she was three years old, many still remained with her in 1546 when a second census of her household was taken. Even her laundress, Agnes Hilton, would have been a familiar face, arriving to scrub the girl's clothing and linens from the time of her infancy.

Elizabeth was legally illegitimate and had little contact with her father in the years after her mother's death. However, in spite of rumours that she would be declared to be the daughter of one of Anne Boleyn's supposed lovers, Henry VIII always acknowledged her as his daughter. She continued to be raised in the royal nursery alongside Prince Edward. Edward's mother, Jane Seymour, died less than two weeks after his birth, while the king's next two marriages, to Anne of Cleves and Catherine Howard, were short-lived. With her half-sister, Mary, Elizabeth dined with the king in September 1542 near Romford, which may have been the first time that she had seen her father in some years. In July 1543 Elizabeth made her first recorded appearance back at court, to attend Henry's final wedding.

Henry VIII's sixth wife, Catherine Parr, had already been widowed twice when she caught the king's eye. She was childless, but had raised her second husband's children. Henry's eldest daughter, Princess Mary, was only a few years younger than her new stepmother, but the pair quickly became friends. To the king's younger children - Elizabeth and Edward - Catherine was determined to be a mother. Edward was soon writing to her as his 'most


Elizabeth's father, Henry VIII, married six wives in his bid to produce a male heir and safeguard the Tudor succession

honourable and entirely beloved mother', while Elizabeth was Catherine's 'most obedient daughter'.

Catherine Parr was almost certainly influential in Henry's decision in 1544 to restore his two daughters to the succession by Act of Parliament. Both Mary and Elizabeth remained legally illegitimate and were placed in the succession behind Edward and any other children - either male or female - that Catherine should bear. However, it marked a major change in status for both princesses.

Soon after the Act was passed Henry commissioned a great painting in which he sits with his queen and his son in a central position, flanked on either side by his daughters. While Elizabeth's place in the family was now assured it may have been a concern to the still childless Catherine Parr that she did not feature: the queen depicted was Edward's deceased mother, Jane Seymour. Elizabeth would also have been conscious that, although a part of the family, she was separated from the central group. Henry VIII's main reason for including his daughters' in the succession was probably pragmatic: by 1544 he recognised that he was unlikely to father further 'legitimate' children.

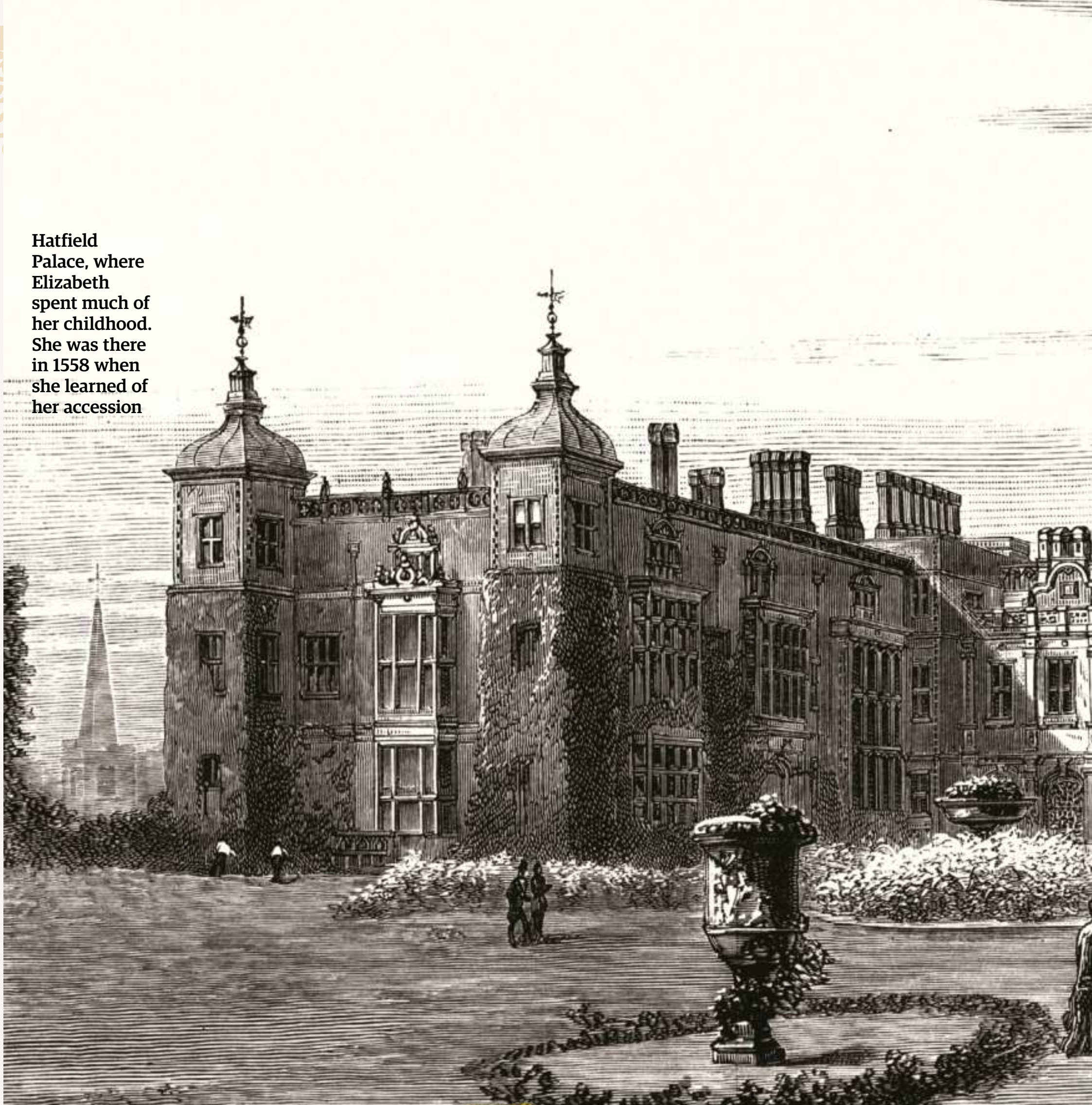
While Elizabeth returned to her own residence not long after the wedding, she continued to correspond with Catherine. When, in July 1544, Henry VIII left his sixth wife as regent while he fought in France, Catherine brought Elizabeth back to court to live with her.

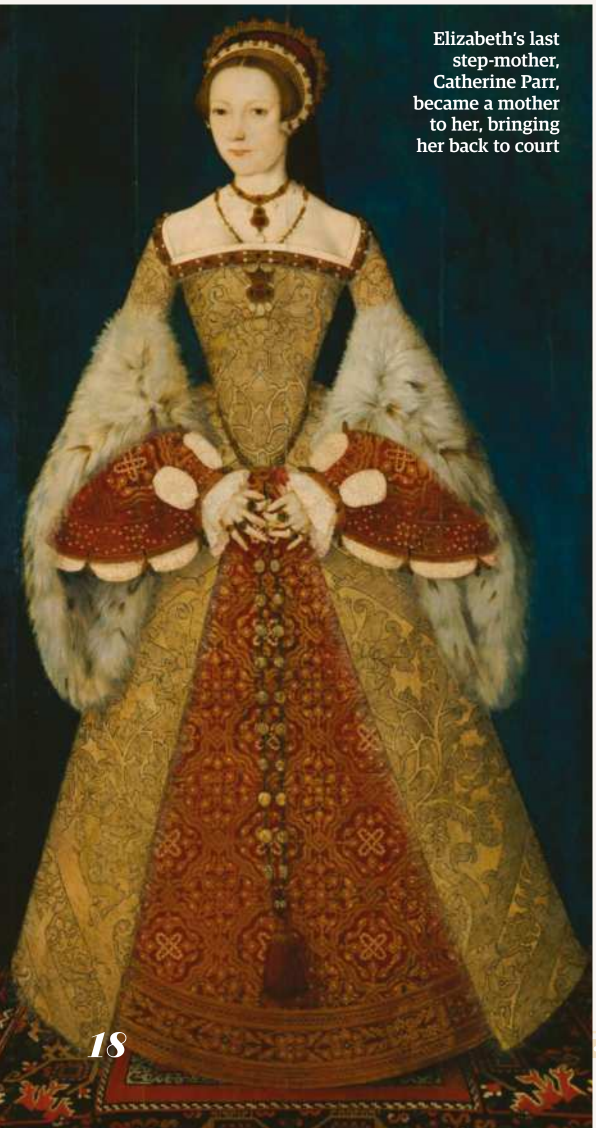
Catherine Parr has the distinction of being England's first Protestant queen and she sought to instill her reformist beliefs in her stepdaughter. Elizabeth was eager to please and, for New Year 1545 she presented her stepmother with a translation, in her own hand, of the reform-minded Margaret of Navarre's *Mirror of the Christian Soul*. In her preface to the work, Elizabeth showed her fondness for her stepmother, referring to herself as Catherine's 'humble daughter' and begging to be excused any errors in the work.

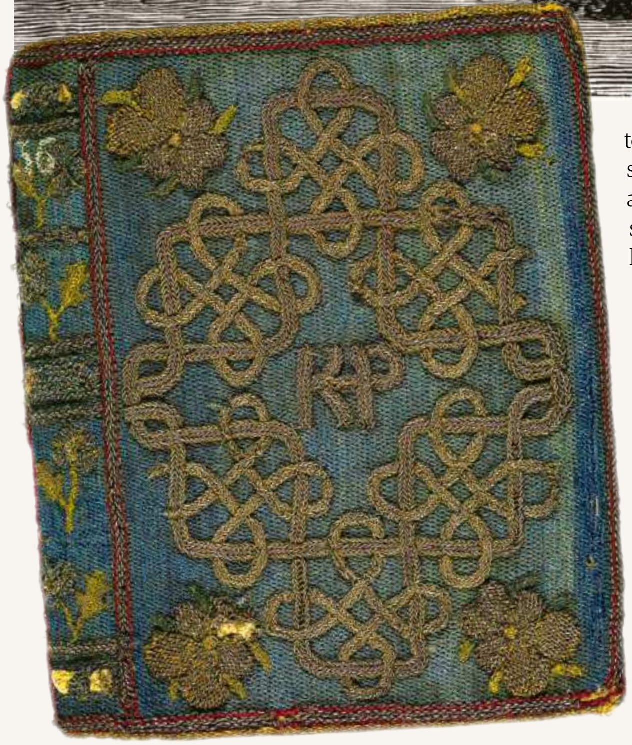
Margaret of Navarre's work set out the key Protestant doctrine that justification and salvation was achieved by faith alone, and Elizabeth's translation of the book is evidence that she knew her stepmother approved of its content.

The following year, Elizabeth went a step further, presenting Catherine with a translation of some of John Calvin's work, while she gave her father a Latin, French and Italian translation of Catherine's own religious work, entitled *Prayers Or Meditations*.

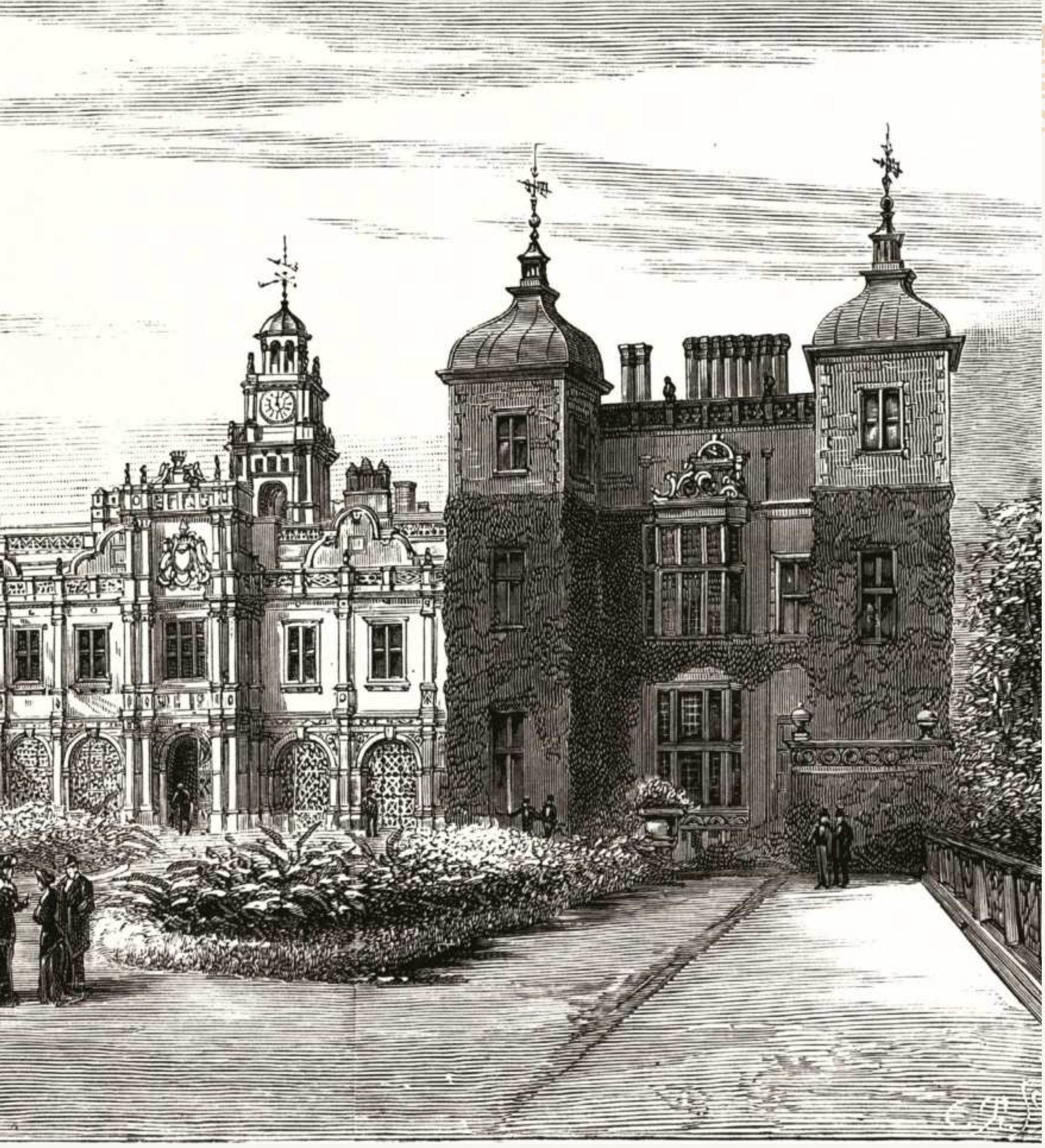
Thanks to the example of the daughters of Sir Thomas More in the early 16th century, it had become very fashionable to educate upper-class girls in the Tudor period. Elizabeth's earliest lessons may have been undertaken by her chaplain,


Hatfield Palace, where Elizabeth spent much of her childhood. She was there in 1558 when she learned of her accession


Elizabeth's last step-mother, Catherine Parr, became a mother to her, bringing her back to court



For New Year 1545, Elizabeth presented her stepmother with this book - her translation of *The Mirror of the Sinful Soul*, embroidered with Catherine's initials



"Facially, she resembled her mother, sharing her dark, almond-shaped eyes. With her red hair and fair skin, however, she recalled her father, Henry VIII"

Sir Ralph Taylor, who had served the princess throughout her childhood.

The girl's curriculum was soon expanded with the appointment of Katherine, or Kate, Champernowne, who is more famously known by her later married name of Ashley. Kate, who was personally appointed by Henry VIII, became Elizabeth's governess in 1536 thanks to her learning and the 'distinguished teaching' she could provide. She taught Elizabeth her letters and the rudiments of a good education, with the scholar, Roger Ascham, recalling Kate's 'excellent counsel'. Elizabeth, too, later noted that Kate "took great labour and pain in bringing of me up in learning and honesty." There were limits to what even a well-educated gentlewoman could teach and, in 1544, Kate gave up her place to a new tutor, William Grindal, who had studied at Cambridge under the renowned Roger Ascham.

Grindal was particularly celebrated for his knowledge of Ancient Greek. He immediately introduced his royal pupil to a rigorous curriculum of Plato, treating her – to all intents and purposes – like one of his university students. The 11-year-old thrived under his tuition, sitting for lessons with him every day of the week. He would teach Elizabeth until his sudden death from the plague early in 1548, with his place then taken by Ascham himself. Kate also remained in the household, becoming Elizabeth's lady mistress late in 1546 when Lady Troy retired.

Elizabeth spent much time in the company of her stepmother after 1544, but both she and Edward returned to their separate establishments in the autumn of 1546, to spend Christmas in their own households. Elizabeth went to the pleasant royal hunting lodge at Enfield, where she had spent Christmas four years before, in the company of both her half-siblings. It was also around this time that Elizabeth sat for her first individual portrait, standing pale faced in a crimson dress. Facially, she resembled her mother, sharing her dark, almond-

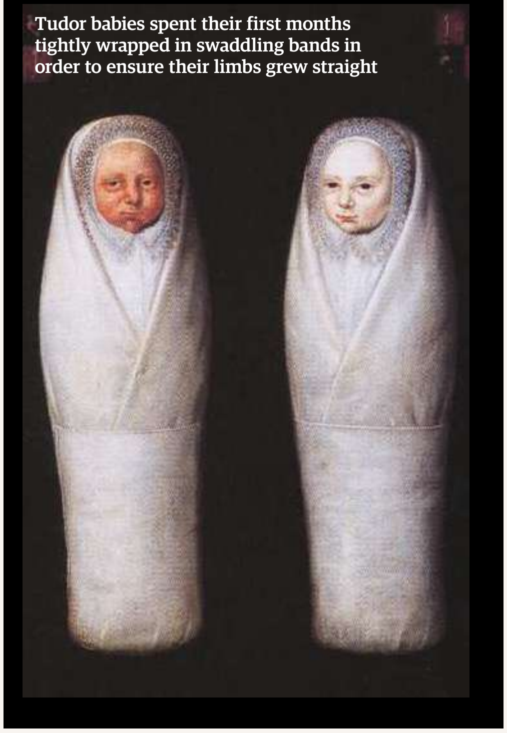
Tudor nurseries

16th-century royals and their odd ways of raising children

Tudor babies were swaddled in long flannel or linen bands, designed to help the limbs grow straight and rendering the child almost completely immobile. Underneath was a 'breech cloth' or nappy, fastened in place with a pin and made of some absorbent material. Every child would possess several sets of swaddling bands, with the bands changed regularly. Many infants, too, had a decorative best set, which they would only wear for special occasions.

Upper-class Tudor babies were fed by a wetnurse. For royal babies, such as Elizabeth, this would be a gentlewoman, who had been assessed to ensure that she would not pass on any poor character traits in her milk. The bond between a wetnurse and her charge could be very strong. Henry VIII, for example, invited his former wetnurse, Anne Oxenbridge, to his coronation in 1509, as well as providing her with a gown to wear. He also paid her a substantial pension.

Tudor children spent their time in the nursery at play, with toys available to suit every parental purse. Just as today, they could be placed in baby walkers (wooden frames on wheels to allow them to walk), while hobby horses, dolls and various animal figurines were also common.



Tudor babies spent their first months tightly wrapped in swaddling bands in order to ensure their limbs grew straight shaped eyes. With her red-hair and fair skin, however, she recalled her father, Henry VIII.

By December 1546 Henry VIII was ailing, suffering a sudden fever in the middle of the month, that left him 'greatly fallen away'. While he declared himself 'quite restored' soon after that, the 55-year-old king was far from well. On Christmas Eve 1546 he abandoned any pretense, abruptly sending his wife and Princess Mary to Greenwich while he remained closeted away at Westminster with his Privy Council.

Henry VIII expected his end to be imminent and, after a secluded Christmas, asked six members of his council to bring his will. The document, which had been prepared in 1544, most likely named Catherine Parr as regent for the nine-year-old Prince Edward. However, in 1546, Henry had come close to arresting his sixth wife for heresy, thanks to her Protestant beliefs of which he did not approve. On reading his will in December 1546, he expressed his surprise at the content.

On 30 December a new will - drafted in accordance with his instructions - was presented to him. Although doubts would later be cast on the authenticity of this document (including by Henry's daughter, Princess Mary), the king appeared to be active in its drafting. In it, he confirmed that his son, Edward, was heir to the throne while, after him, the succession was to pass to Mary and Elizabeth in turn. Catherine was excluded from power and the country to be administered by 16 equal ranking executors. Henry left his wife and

Elizabeth's Chequers ring

This remarkable locket ring prised from the finger of Queen Elizabeth I hides a very sentimental secret

In the early hours of 24 March 1603, Queen Elizabeth I slipped into a deep sleep - one from which she never woke up. Decked in the finest clothing and jewels, one very significant ring was resting on her hand - a locket ring, which housed two miniature portraits. Its secret soon fell open to her court.

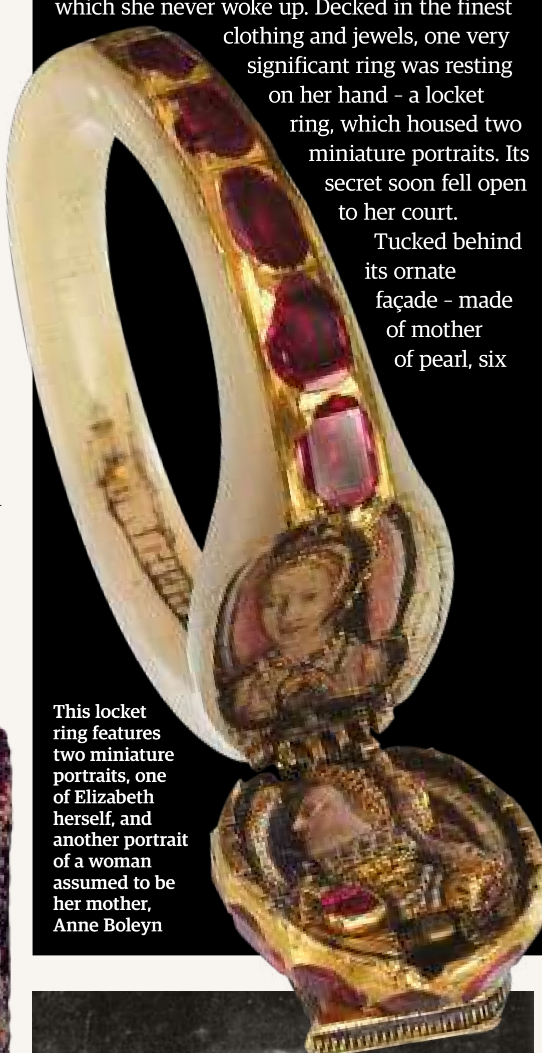
Tucked behind its ornate façade - made of mother of pearl, six diamonds, enamel and rubies - sits two intricate portraits, one of Elizabeth herself aged about 40, and another of an anonymous young woman dressed in a French hood and the favourite garb of Henry VIII's court. With the auburn hair reminiscent of a near-contemporary portrait of Anne Boleyn, it's thought that this unnamed woman is Elizabeth's executed mother.

Elizabeth was only two when Anne Boleyn was beheaded, and the former queen's name and reputation was tarnished at court. Acknowledgement of the disgraced woman became taboo; Elizabeth I rarely mentioned her mother. By wearing her locket ring, Elizabeth found a way to cherish her memory, keeping her with her at all times.

Some historians question the certainty that it is Anne Boleyn, with some suggesting that the portrait is of a younger Elizabeth, while another idea is that this anonymous woman is actually Catherine Parr, Elizabeth's final stepmother to whom she was close. Comparing the likeness of the portrait with the known image of Parr, however, throws shade on the latter idea.

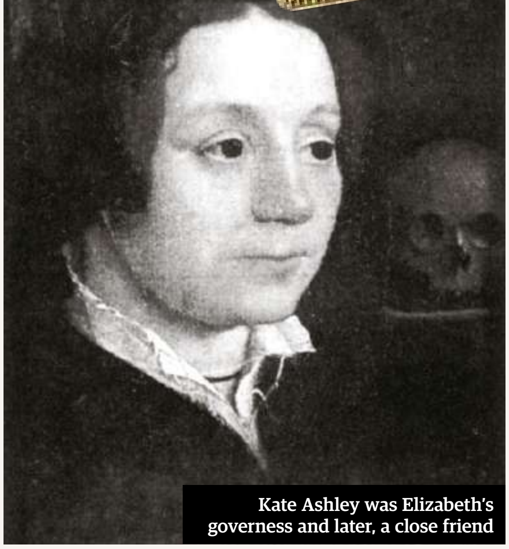
Where the ring comes from is disputed, as no record of it exist in any inventories of Elizabeth's jewellery. Some claim that the Queen had the ring commissioned herself, while others argue that the ring was a gift from an intimate friend or family member that recognised Elizabeth's secret sentimentality.

The ring now rests in a collection at the British prime minister's countryside residence at Chequers, from which the ring gets its name.

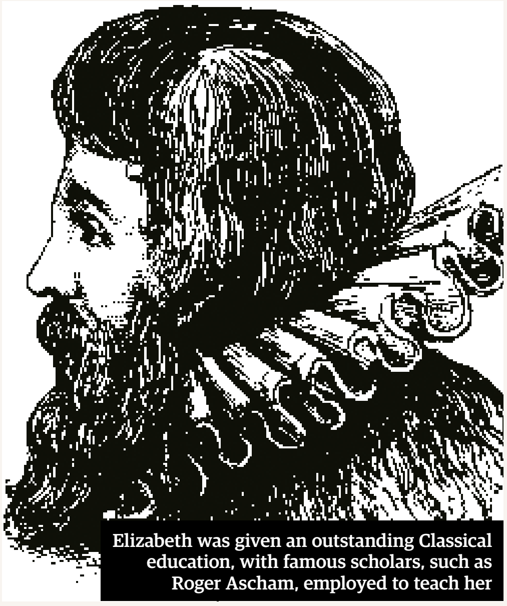


This locket ring features two miniature portraits, one of Elizabeth herself, and another portrait of a woman assumed to be her mother, Anne Boleyn

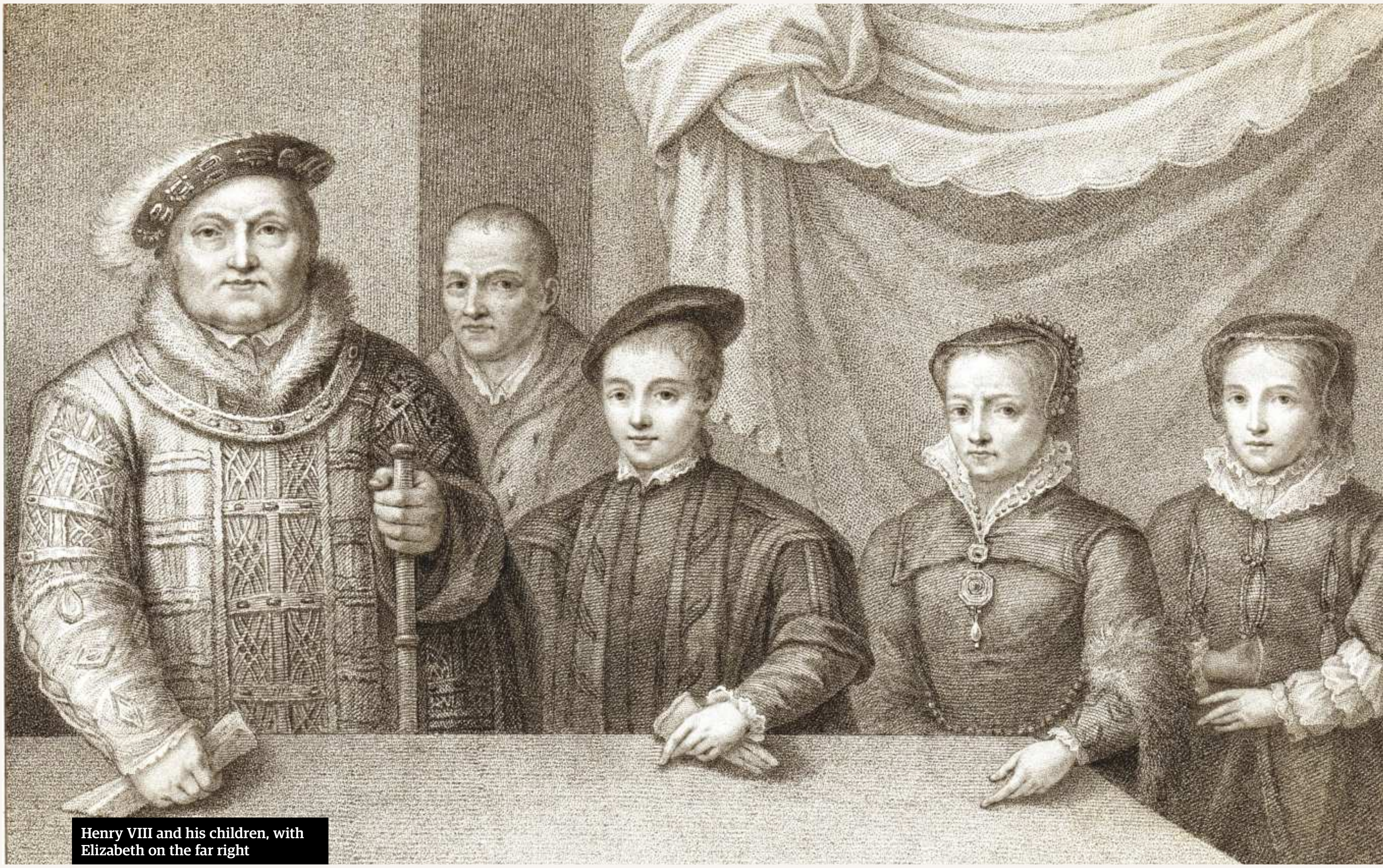
As a New Year's gift to Henry VIII, Elizabeth produced this embroidered trilingual translation of Catherine Parr's *Prayers or Meditations*



Kate Ashley was Elizabeth's governess and later, a close friend



Elizabeth was given an outstanding Classical education, with famous scholars, such as Roger Ascham, employed to teach her



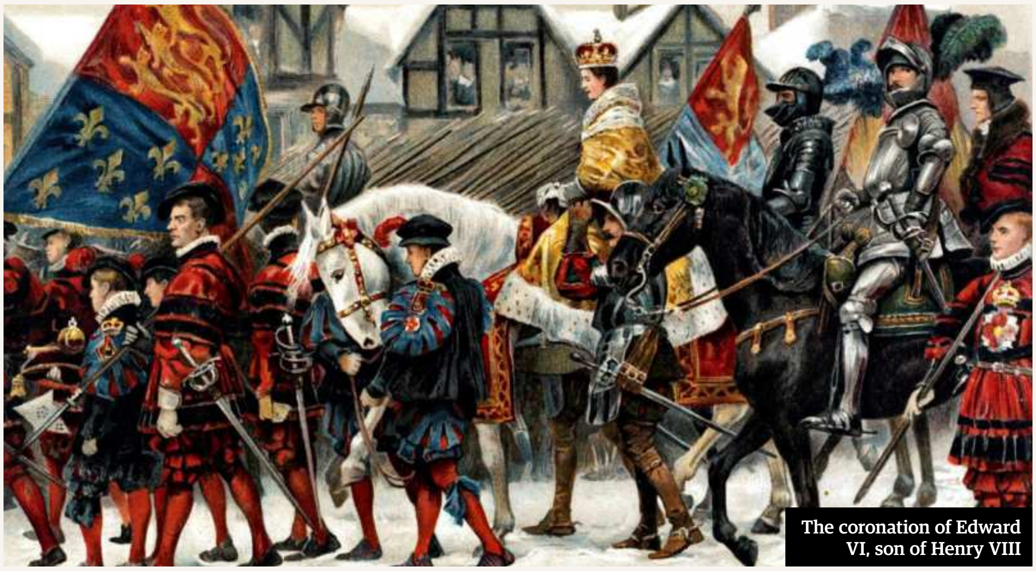
Henry VIII and his children, with Elizabeth on the far right

daughters wealthy, with Elizabeth to receive the sum of £3000 per year.

Elizabeth was at Enfield Palace on 28 January 1547 when her father died, leaving the 13 year old an orphan. The king's death was at first kept secret while Edward Seymour took steps to secure the regency for himself. He also secured the person of the boy king, riding to Hertford, where the new Edward VI was staying. Seymour, who was aware of the affection between Elizabeth and Edward, resolved not to tell the boy of his father's death, instead riding with him the next day to Enfield.

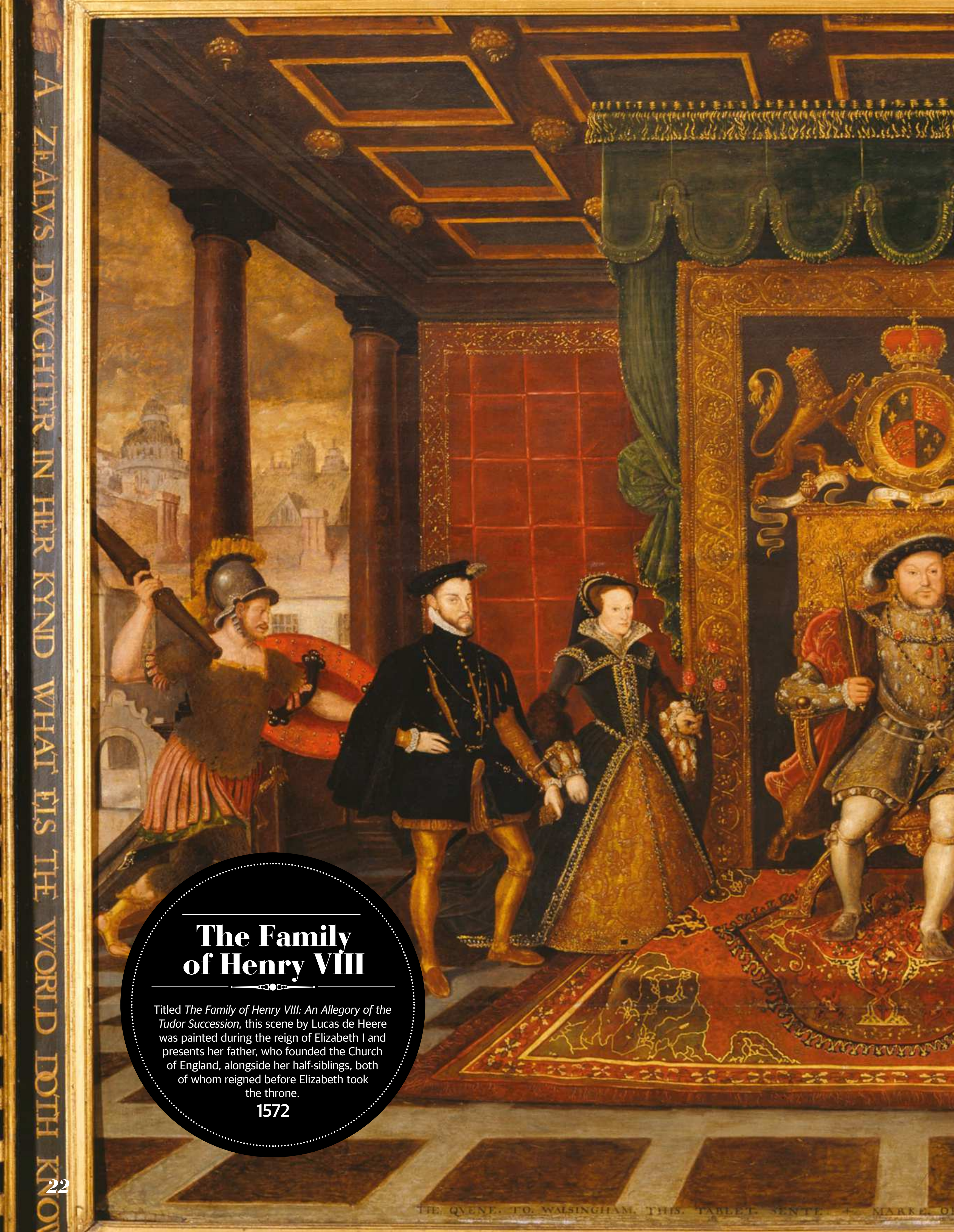
At Enfield, Seymour brought the two children together. As he informed them that their father had died, Elizabeth and Edward fell into each other's arms, weeping. Henry VIII had overshadowed the lives of all his children. To his younger daughter, he had been a distant but fond father, who had once enjoined his 'own good daughter' to 'remember me most heartily when you your prayers do pray for grace to be attained assuredly to your loving father'. Although he had provided a far from stable childhood, Elizabeth would remember Henry respectfully for the rest of her life. By reinstating her in the succession in 1544, he also ensured she was a figure of real political consequence.

"Although he had provided a far from stable childhood, Elizabeth would remember Henry respectfully"



The coronation of Edward VI, son of Henry VIII

© Getty Images, Alamy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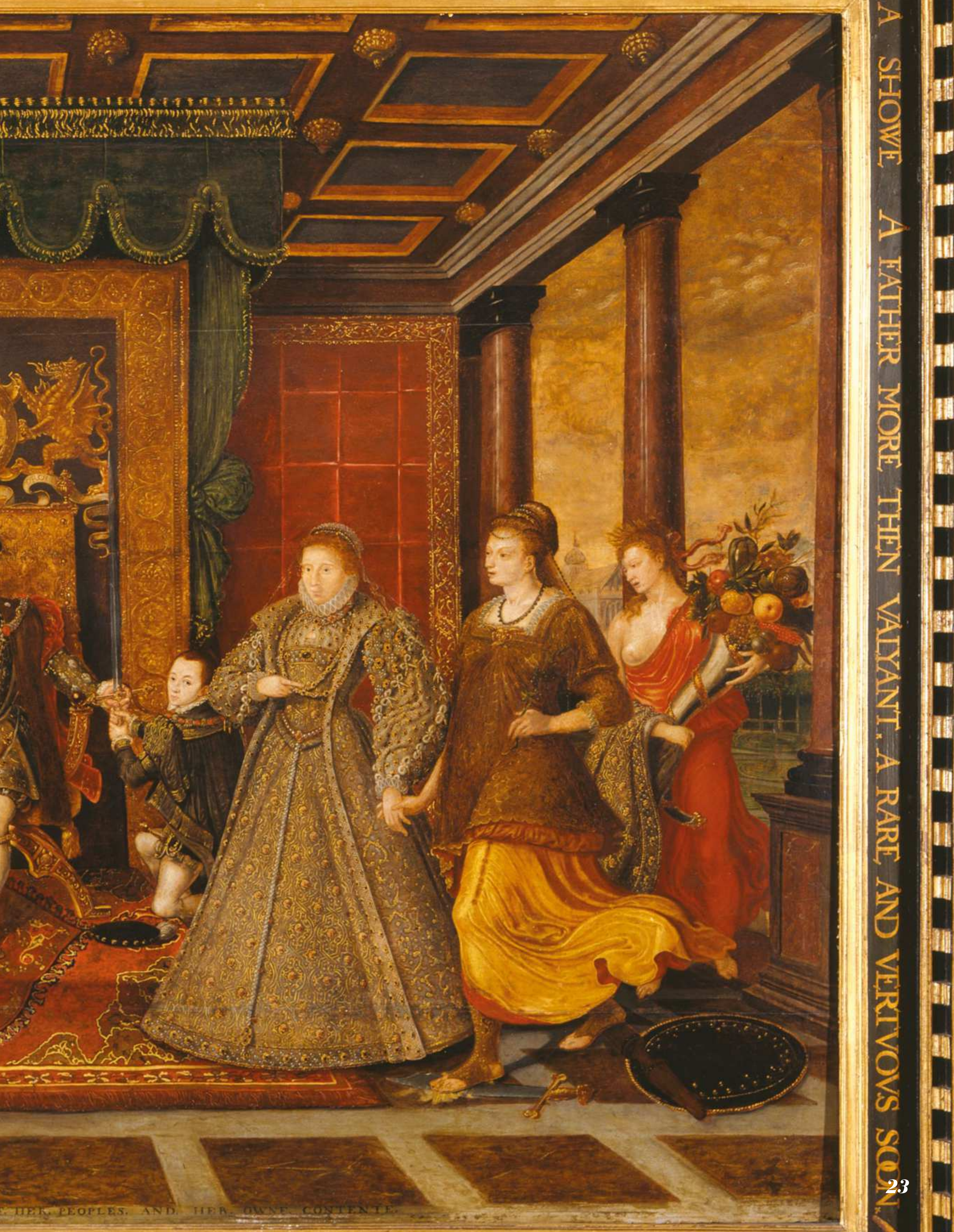
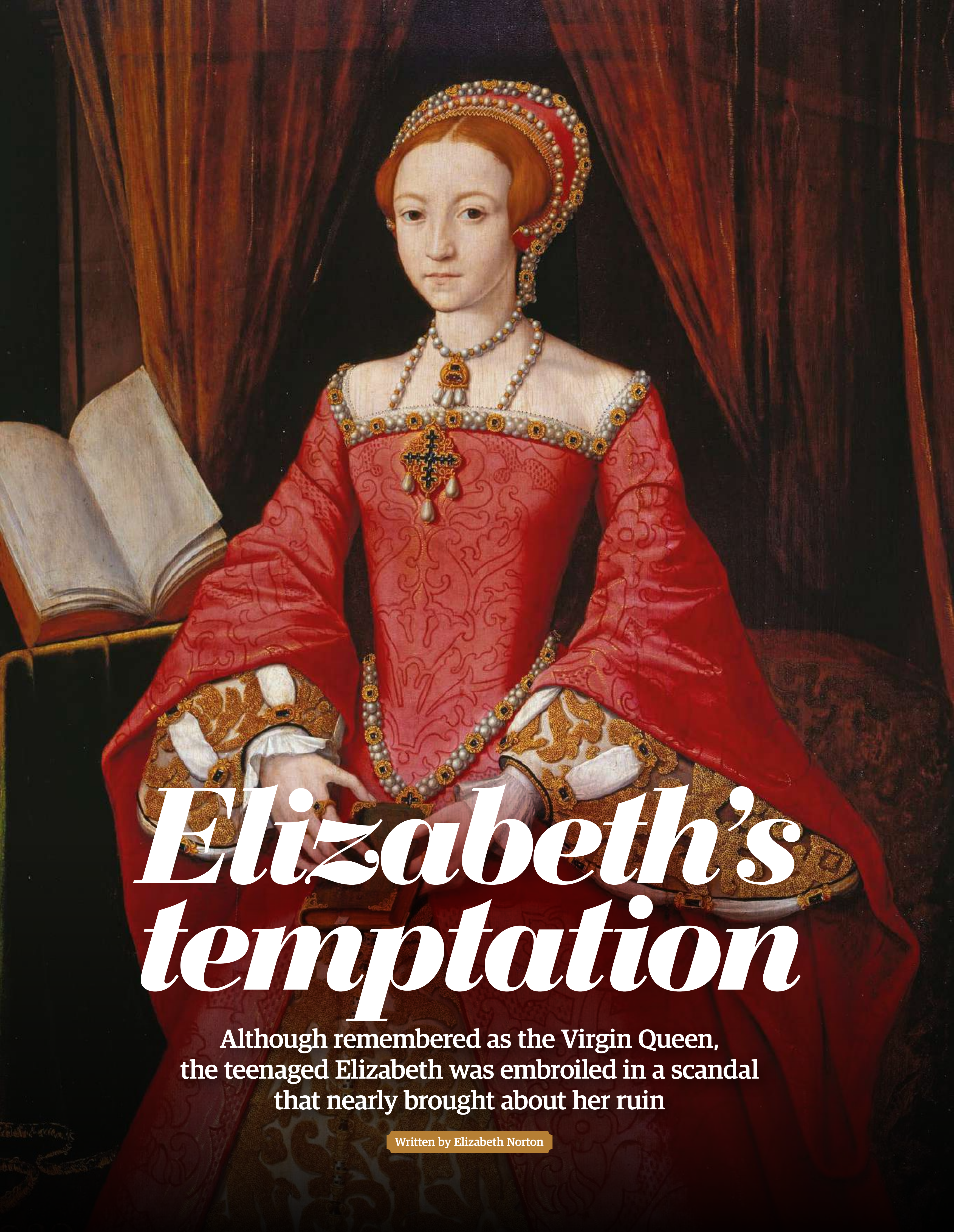
The Family of Henry VIII

Titled *The Family of Henry VIII: An Allegory of the Tudor Succession*, this scene by Lucas de Heere was painted during the reign of Elizabeth I and presents her father, who founded the Church of England, alongside her half-siblings, both of whom reigned before Elizabeth took the throne.

1572


A SHOWE A FATHER MORE THEN VALYANT, A RARE AND VERTVOVS SOON
HER. PEOPLES. AND. HER. OWNE. CONTENTE.



Elizabeth's temptation

Although remembered as the Virgin Queen, the teenaged Elizabeth was embroiled in a scandal that nearly brought about her ruin

Written by Elizabeth Norton

Elizabeth I is remembered as England's Virgin Queen, but there was a time when her virginity was not so securely guarded. As an orphaned teenager, she was involved in a scandal that put her place in the succession at stake. For Thomas Seymour, who orchestrated the illicit affair, the cost was his life.

An ailing Henry VIII spent Christmas 1546 with his Privy Council at Westminster. Among them was Edward Seymour, the eldest brother of Henry's third wife, Jane Seymour, and uncle of his heir, Prince Edward. During this time Henry changed his will, appointing a regency council of 16 equal ranking executors to rule on his nine-year-old son's behalf. Edward Seymour was fourth on the list. His younger brother, Thomas, was named only as an assistant to the executors.

After Henry VIII died on 28 January 1547 at Whitehall, Edward Seymour overruled the will, declaring himself Lord Protector and governor of the new young king, Edward VI. He appointed himself the title of Duke of Somerset, too, while his younger brother had to be content with a peerage, a pension and the comparatively mediocre office of Lord High Admiral.

"Taking advantage of the fact that Elizabeth slept alone, Thomas made his way to her chamber early one morning"

Thomas Seymour was then around 40 years old, well built and handsome, with a fashionable thick beard. One contemporary considered that he was "fierce in courage, courtly in fashion, in personage stately, in voice magnificent, but somewhat empty of matter". Thomas was entirely oblivious to his shortcomings. Angered that his brother had secured both the protectorship and the guardianship of the king, he determined to seek a royal bride. After being refused the hand of Henry VIII's elder daughter, he turned his attentions to the 13-year-old Princess Elizabeth.

Less than a month after her father's death, Thomas Seymour wrote to Elizabeth, telling her, "I dare not tell you of the fire which consumes me, and the impatience with which I yearn to show you my devotion", while begging her to consent to marriage, since then she would have "made the happiness of a man who will adore you till death".

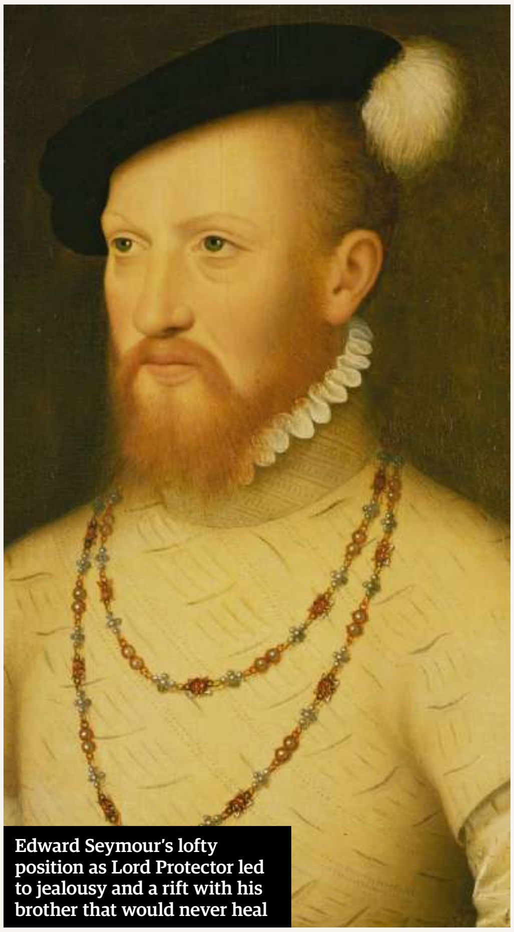
Elizabeth replied that she was "very much surprised" by the suit, insisting that she was too young to even think of matrimony. Her words were not, however, an outright refusal. Elizabeth discussed the letter only with her governess Katherine - or Kate - Ashley, to whom she was devoted. She said nothing to her stepmother, Queen Catherine Parr, with whom she was then living.

Thomas had already begun to court a woman he calculated was more likely to accept. Catherine Parr was a pretty, auburn-haired widow of 30 when Henry VIII had decided to make her his sixth wife in 1543. She had been a reluctant bride, since she had already fallen in love with Thomas Seymour, whom (as she later recalled), she wished to marry "before any many I know". Catherine had hoped to be appointed as her stepson's regent and was as disaffected with Somerset's regime as Thomas. She was persuaded to marry Thomas in secret, with the couple securing the king's approval in the summer of 1547. Faced with this fait accompli, Somerset was forced to accept his brother's royal marriage, but in private he and his wife referred to the match as "that hell". The relationship between the brothers would never recover.

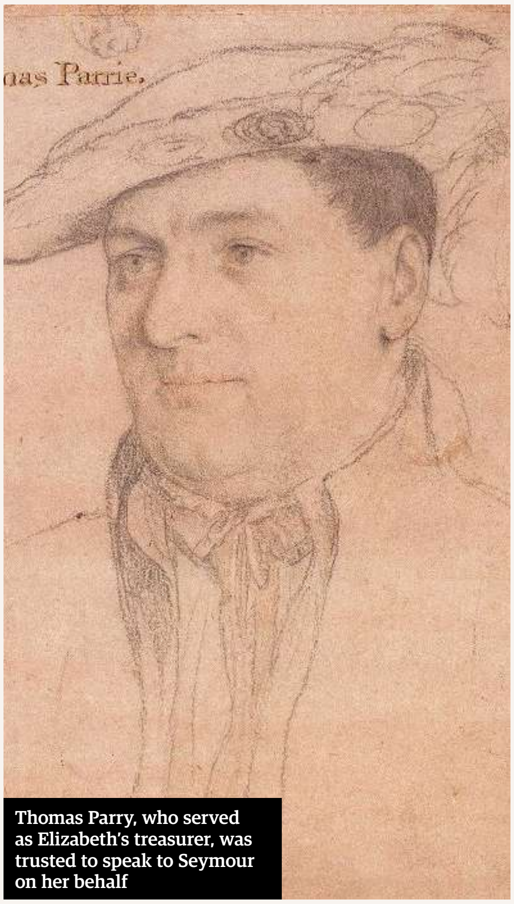
At the queen's house at Chelsea, Kate Ashley had ordered that the pallet bed on which she usually slept in Elizabeth's room be removed on the grounds that the princess' room "was so little". Most likely the newly married Kate, who had always refused to allow anyone else to chaperone the girl, wanted to share a bed with her husband, yet she left Elizabeth dangerously unprotected.

Taking advantage of the fact that Elizabeth slept alone, Thomas made his way to her chamber early one morning not long after he officially joined the household. Entering the room as the princess lay in bed, he leaned in towards her, calling "good morrow" before seeming to pounce as though he would climb in with her. Elizabeth moved back towards the pillows, pulling the covers up around her, but she made no attempt to rise. This was scandalous behaviour and the princess must have been shocked.

She made an effort to rise earlier on subsequent mornings and she was out of bed when Thomas next came. Still in her nightdress, while Thomas wore a short nightgown ("barelegged in his slippers"), he approached and asked "how she did". At this, the princess turned to move away, but not before Thomas had smacked her on the back and then "familiarly" on her buttocks. She fled to her maidens in the next room but Thomas followed,



Edward Seymour's lofty position as Lord Protector led to jealousy and a rift with his brother that would never heal



Thomas Parry, who served as Elizabeth's treasurer, was trusted to speak to Seymour on her behalf

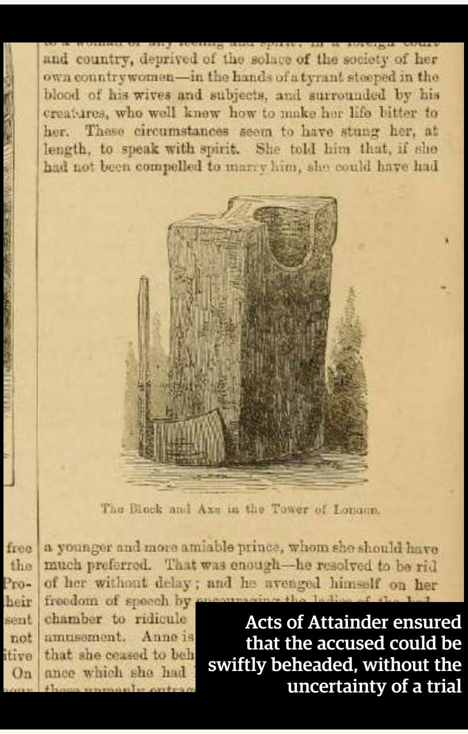
Acts of Attainder

Tudor prisoners were sometimes not brought to trial – Acts of Attainder were an expedient way of dispatching political prisoners

Thomas Seymour was not permitted to defend himself at trial. Instead, a Bill of Attainder was introduced into the House of Lords, condemning him to death for treason. After three readings in the Lords, on which the peers voted, it passed into the House of Commons. Once passed there, the king gave his royal assent, making the Bill law. Thomas' brother, "for natural pity's sake", abstained from voting, although he did sign the death warrant. His nephew, Edward VI, merely commented that he was happy for justice to be done.

Acts of Attainder had been used in England since the Medieval period and they were commonly employed against high-profile prisoners as a means of ensuring their conviction without the publicity of a trial. Henry VIII's fifth wife, Catherine Howard, was attained in 1541 for adultery, five years after the king had been embarrassed during the trial of his second wife, Anne Boleyn.

During Anne's trial, details about Henry's impotency had emerged, something that disinclined him to let another of his wives go through the judicial process. Furthermore, Henry's chief minister, Thomas Cromwell was attained in 1540, as was the royal Countess of Salisbury. Attainders persisted as a means of condemning political prisoners until the end of the 18th century.



and country, deprived of the solace of the society of her own countrywomen—in the hands of a tyrant steeped in the blood of his wives and subjects, and surrounded by his creatures, who well knew how to make her life bitter to her. These circumstances seem to have stung her, at length, to speak with spirit. She told him that, if she had not been compelled to marry him, she could have had

The Block and Axe in the Tower of London.

a younger and more amiable prince, whom she should have much preferred. That was enough—he resolved to be rid of her without delay; and he avenged himself on her freedom of speech by

chamber to ridicule

amusement. Anne is

that she ceased to beh

ance which she had

Acts of Attainder ensured that the accused could be swiftly beheaded, without the uncertainty of a trial

speaking playfully with the girl's attendants as if nothing was amiss.

Thomas was rumoured to be an 'oppressor' in his domestic arrangements, and Catherine, though she loved him, dared not vex him. She therefore turned a blind eye as Thomas' visits continued as the household moved to Hanworth in Middlesex later in the summer. She even sometimes participated, including holding Elizabeth as Thomas slashed her dress into pieces in the gardens one day.

Kate Ashley grew increasingly concerned and began to rise early to go to Elizabeth's chamber. She was there one morning while Elizabeth was still sleeping when Thomas came in. He must have seen her, but ignored her, once again reaching for the bed curtains. If anything, Kate's presence seemed only to inflame the situation, as Thomas climbed into the bed itself. The now woken Elizabeth shrank back in the bed but, as Kate cried out, "Go away for shame!", he attempted to kiss the girl. All Kate could do was warn Elizabeth not to let herself be placed in such compromising positions.

Elizabeth was deeply conflicted, since the queen's husband was handsome and she was attracted to him. Nevertheless, she took Kate's admonishing to heart, ensuring that she woke before her usual hour the next day. When she heard Thomas outside the room, "knowing that he would come in", Elizabeth leapt from the bed and called her maids. Together, they hid behind the bed curtains, keeping out of Thomas' reach. He waited with growing impatience but Elizabeth remained as she was, her mounting unease recognised even by the women around her. That day they told Kate what had occurred.

Worried that the conduct was "misliked" by the household, Kate resolved to speak to Thomas herself, finding him in the gallery at Hanworth. There, she berated him on his conduct, stating, "These things were complained of, and that My Lady was evil spoken of." Thomas was having none of it, swearing fiercely "God's precious soul!" before declaring that "he would tell My Lord Protector how it slandered him, and he would leave it, for he meant no evil".

Kate discussed the matter with her husband, running over the events of the day and the previous weeks. John Ashley, who was himself one of Elizabeth's chief attendants, was as concerned as his wife, warning her "to take heed". He had his own private worries that he now shared, confiding that "he did fear that the Lady Elizabeth did bear some affection to my Lord Admiral", since "she seemed to be well pleased" with his attentions and "sometimes she would blush when he was spoken of". Catherine, too, was increasingly concerned, complaining to Kate that Elizabeth had been seen embracing a man. When Elizabeth tearfully denied this, Kate concluded that the queen had made it up out of jealousy and to ensure that she kept a closer watch on the princess.

Matters finally came to a head in June 1548. As the household prepared to move to Sudeley Castle, the heavily pregnant Catherine discovered her husband and stepdaughter embracing. It was a cruel blow for the queen and her first reaction

> "As the household prepared to move to Sudeley Castle, the heavily pregnant Catherine discovered her husband and stepdaughter embracing"

Kate Ashley, whom Elizabeth loved like a mother, failed to protect her young charge from Seymour's advances

"Thomas was rumoured to be an 'oppressor' in his domestic arrangements, and Catherine, though she loved him, dared not vex him"

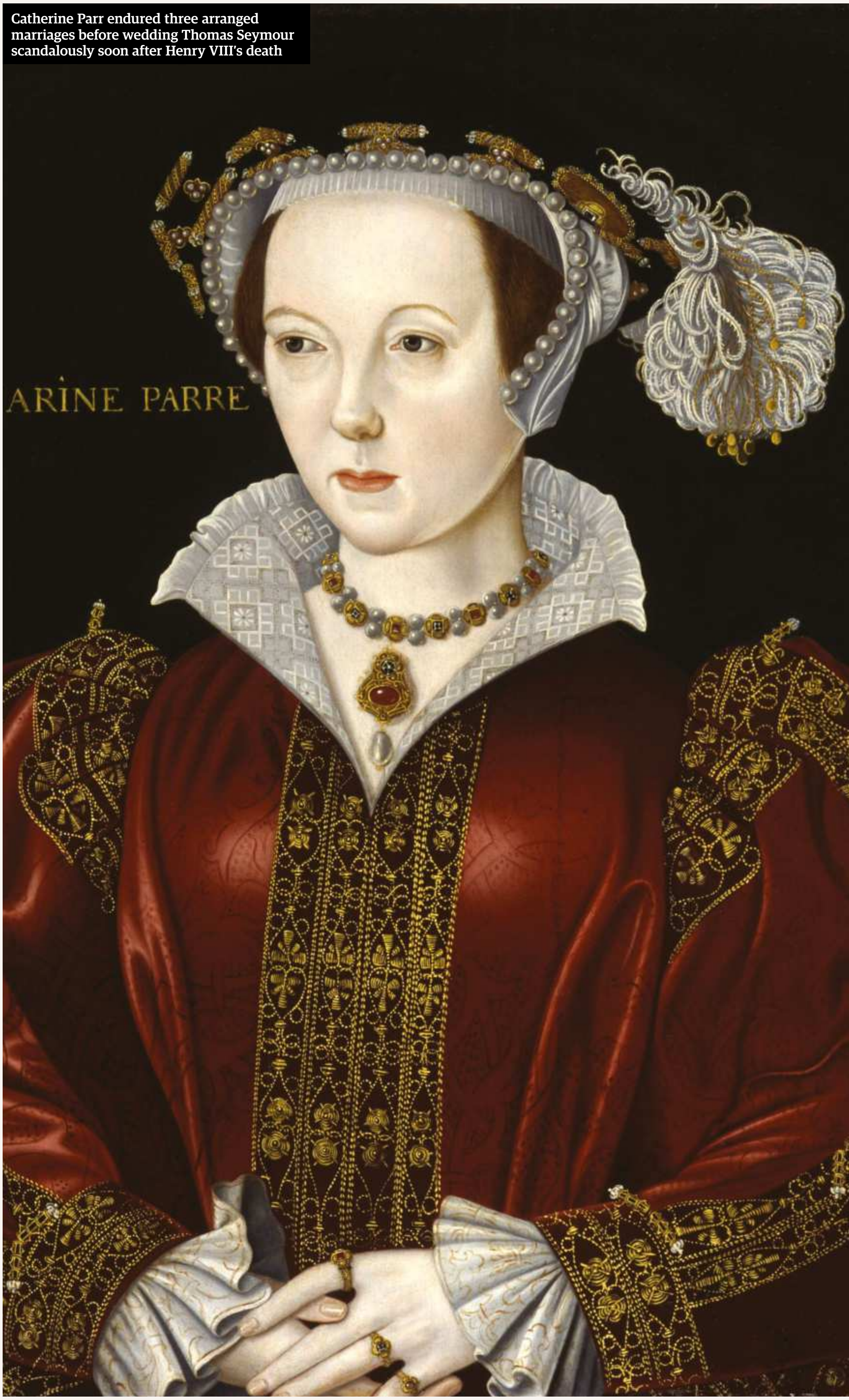
was to rant and rave at the pair before venting her "displeasure" on Kate Ashley. Concerned, too, about the political implications, Catherine sent Elizabeth to stay with her friends Sir Anthony Denny and his wife at Cheshunt in Hertfordshire. Stepmother and stepdaughter never saw each other again.

Catherine died on 5 September 1548 shortly after giving birth. She spent her feverish last days raving at her husband for his "many shrewd taunts". Callously, Kate Ashley broke the news to the princess at Cheshunt with the words, "Madam, now you may have your husband that was appointed you at the death of the king." Elizabeth answered only "nay", but Kate was indeed right. Thomas Seymour had become "the noblest man unmarried in this land".

He was also the most troublesome man in England. He had spent the past year conspiring against his brother and attempting to win the young king's affection with pocket money and his plotting only increased following Catherine's death. Thomas spoke openly of the 10,000 armed men he could raise from his tenants and retainers, while he asked his friend, William Sharington, who ran the Bristol mint, to prepare sufficient counterfeit coins to pay them.

Thomas also had designs on Elizabeth, who had recently moved to Hatfield House. Her cofferer, Thomas Parry, was soon regularly visiting Thomas in London. The pair discussed Elizabeth's lands, with Thomas suggesting that she make some exchanges so that her property holding was closer to his geographically - something that looked very much like a precursor to marriage.

When Parry returned to Hatfield in December 1548, Kate asked, "Think you, he goeth about marriage?" Parry answered that he could not tell, although he thought it would be a good match if the council agreed. Elizabeth too quizzed Parry, with her cofferer emboldened enough to ask her whether she would marry Thomas if the king's council consented. Elizabeth later claimed that she had been abashed and refused to answer, but


Catherine Parr endured three arranged marriages before wedding Thomas Seymour scandalously soon after Henry VIII's death

The upstart Seymours

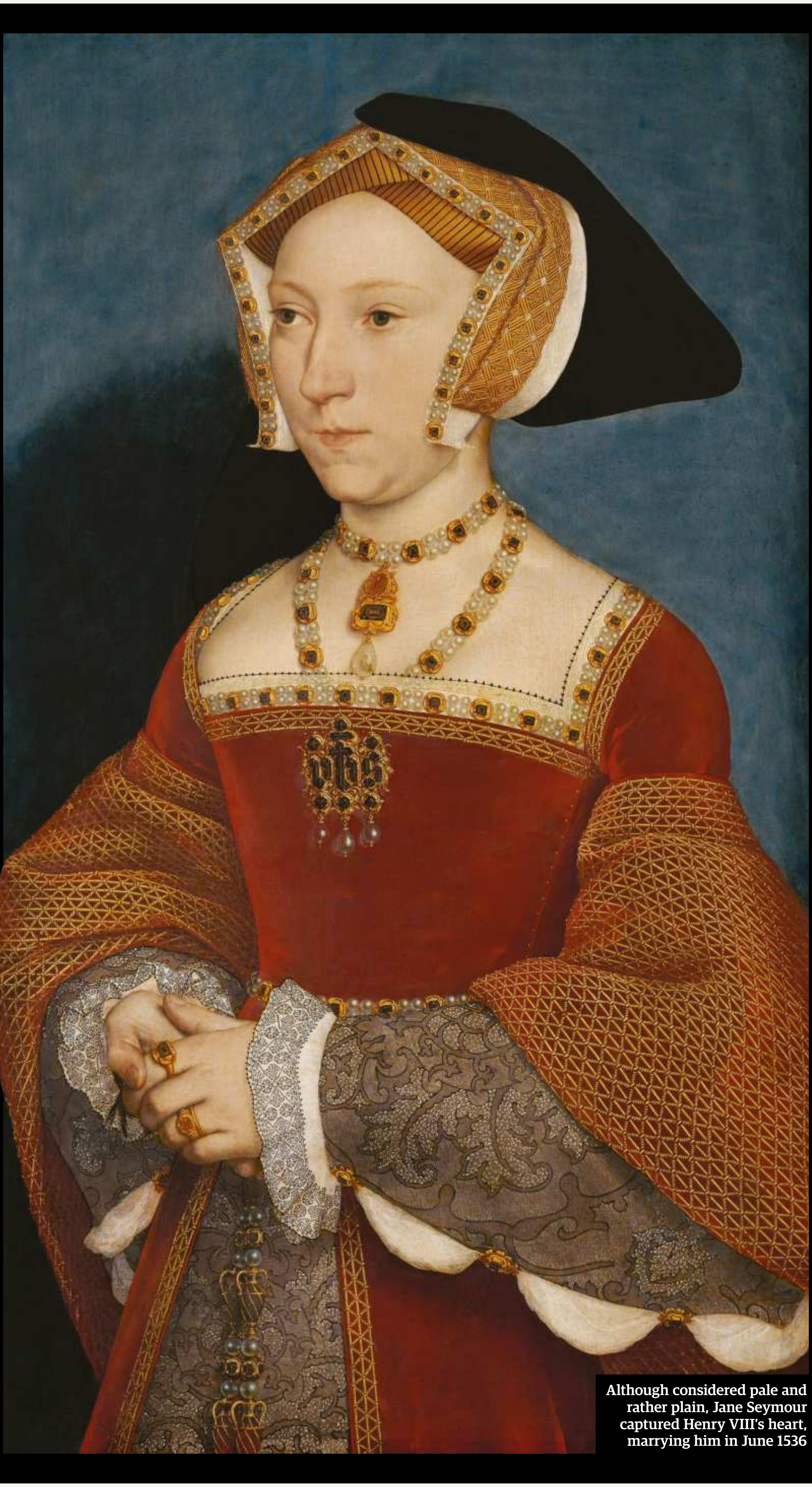
The Seymours moved in exalted circles but they were not born so close to the throne

Edward and Thomas Seymour vied for the regency, with their prominence a far cry from their humble origins. The brothers spent their early years at Wolf Hall in Wiltshire, a modest country manor set in 1,200 acres. Their mother, "benign, courteous and meek" Margery Wentworth, was a niece of the countess of Surrey, but their father, Sir John Seymour, was mere country gentry. For centuries, the family farmed their estates.

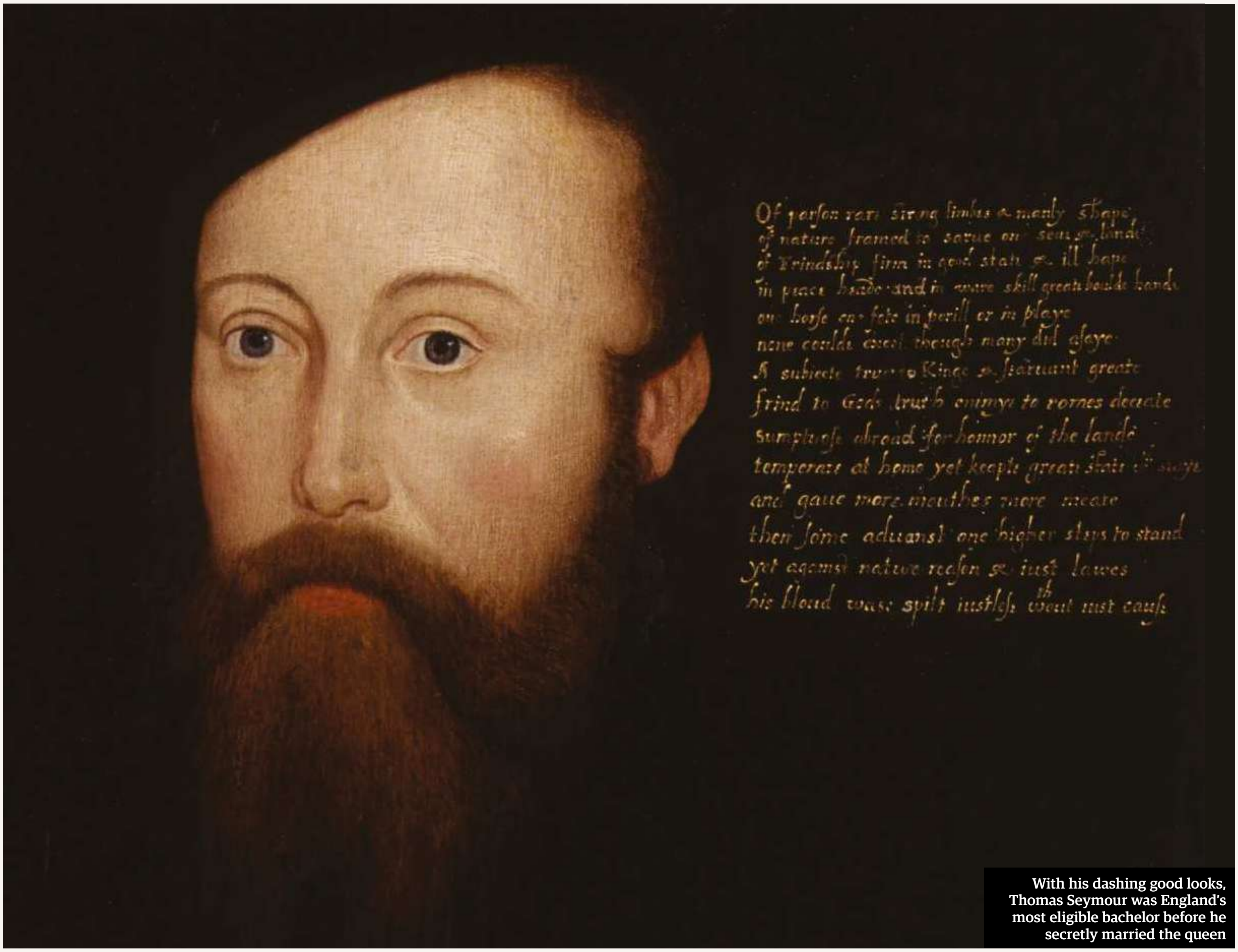
Edward - the eldest surviving child - gained some minor court positions through the help of his cousin, Sir Francis Bryan. The second brother, Henry, however spent his long and uneventful life in the country, just as his father had done. The third son, Thomas, who was more ambitious, attempted to establish himself at court in his youth, but with little success.

> "Thomas, who was more ambitious, attempted to establish himself at court, but with little success"

All this changed when Henry VIII visited Wolf Hall in 1535. The brothers' eldest sister, Jane, caught the king's eye and, to everyone's surprise, became his third wife the next year. Even Jane's death in childbirth in October 1537 couldn't halt the rise of her brothers, with Edward created earl of Hertford and Thomas becoming prominent at court.



Although considered pale and rather plain, Jane Seymour captured Henry VIII's heart, marrying him in June 1536


Of person rare strong limbs & manly shape
of nature framed to serue on sea & lande
of frindship firm in good state & ill hape
in peace heade and in warre skill greate boulde hande
on horse or fote in perill or in playe
none coulde excell though many did assaye
A subiecte true to Kinge & seruant greate
frind to Gods truth enimye to romes deceate
sumptuouse abroad for honnor of the lande
temperate at home yet keapte greate state wth staye
and gaue more mouthes more meate
then some aduanst one higher steps to stand
yet against nature reason & iust lawes
his blood was spilt iustless wthout iust cause

With his dashing good looks, Thomas Seymour was England's most eligible bachelor before he secretly married the queen

"Elizabeth was well aware of Thomas' interest in her and displayed every indication that she reciprocated it"

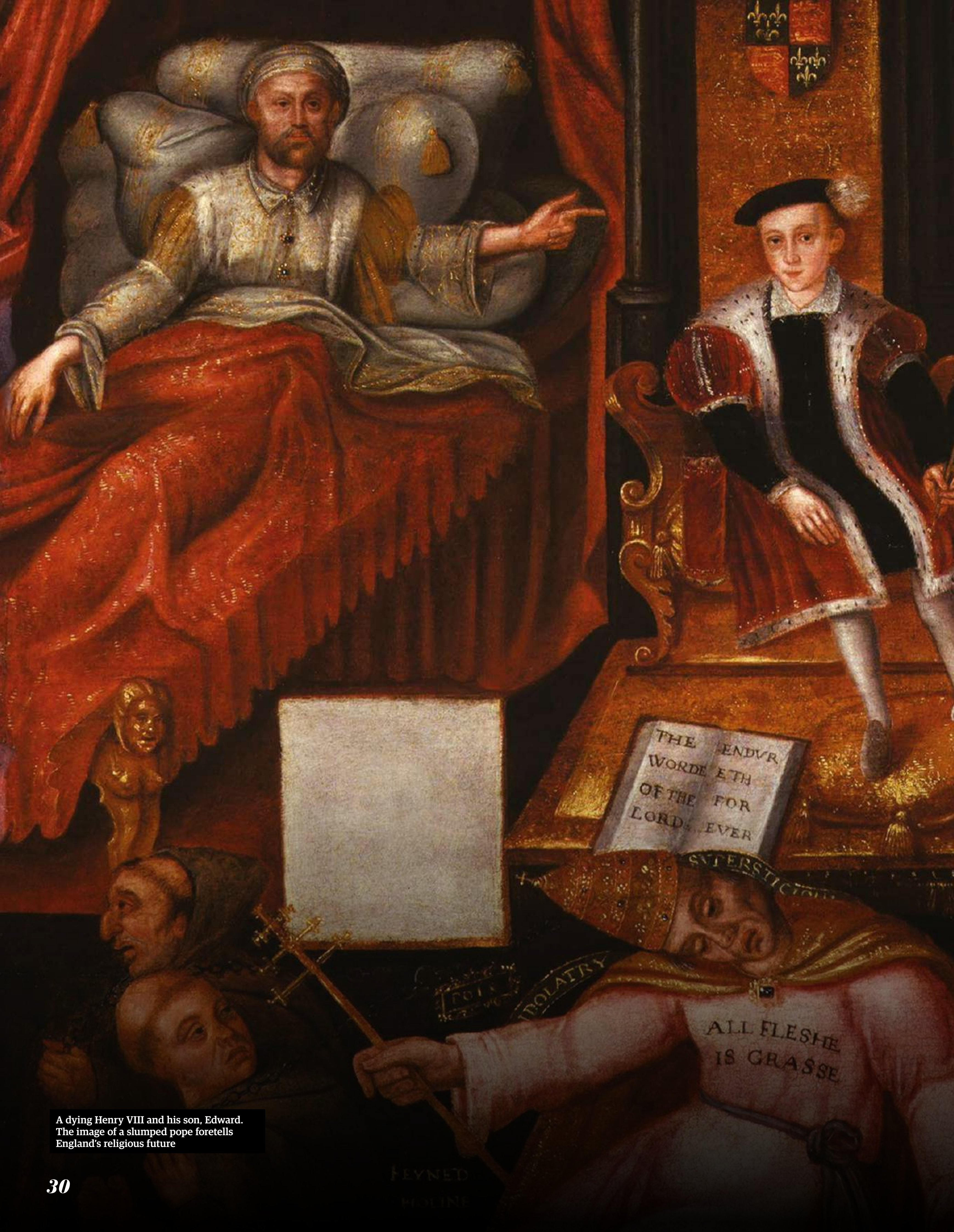
Parry's account rings more true: according to him she answered, "When that comes to pass, I will do as God shall put in my mind." Elizabeth was well aware of Thomas' interest in her and displayed every indication that she reciprocated it.

Thomas was still busy with his plotting but the arrest of William Sharington in January 1549 forced him to act prematurely. On the night of 16 January, the quiet of Westminster Palace was suddenly broken by frantic barking outside. When the alarm was raised, the king's pet dog, which usually slept in his bedchamber, was found stabbed to death. With a key given to him by one of the king's chamberlains, Thomas had sent the guards away on errands before entering the room adjoining the king's bedchamber, only to be disturbed by the dog. Visibly trembling when challenged by a witness, he claimed "that he wished to know whether the prince was safely guarded" before fleeing.

The following day Thomas was sent to the Tower while Sir Robert Tyrwhitt was dispatched to Hatfield to question Elizabeth and arrest her servants. Thomas refused to answer the charges laid against him but Elizabeth, Kate and Parry always insisted that they had never contemplated a marriage without the council's consent. In spite of the embarrassing details that emerged about Elizabeth's relationship with Thomas, the princess' composure under interrogation undoubtedly saved the situation.

Thomas was not so fortunate. On 20 March 1549 he was taken to Tower Hill. He made only a short speech, declaring bitterly, "I have been brought here to suffer death, for as I was lawfully born into this world so I must lawfully leave it because there is some work to be accomplished that cannot be fulfilled unless I am put out of the way." He did not seek forgiveness – although, since it took two brutal strokes to sever his head, the firebrand Bishop Latimer tartly reflected: "Who can tell but that between two strokes he doth repent?"

When informed of Thomas' death, Elizabeth provided his epitaph: "On this day died a man of much wit and very little judgement." She remembered him fondly, years later accepting his portrait as a gift from his former servant. In all her long life, it was Thomas Seymour who came closest to being her husband.


THE WORDE OF THE LORDE
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ALL FLESHE IS GRASSE
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A dying Henry VIII and his son, Edward. The image of a slumped pope foretells England's religious future

Rebuilding the Temple

The short but eventful reign of Edward VI

Though barely nine years old when he came to the throne, Edward VI would help to guide Tudor England through one of its most tempestuous eras and leave a legacy that would come to define the reign of Elizabeth I

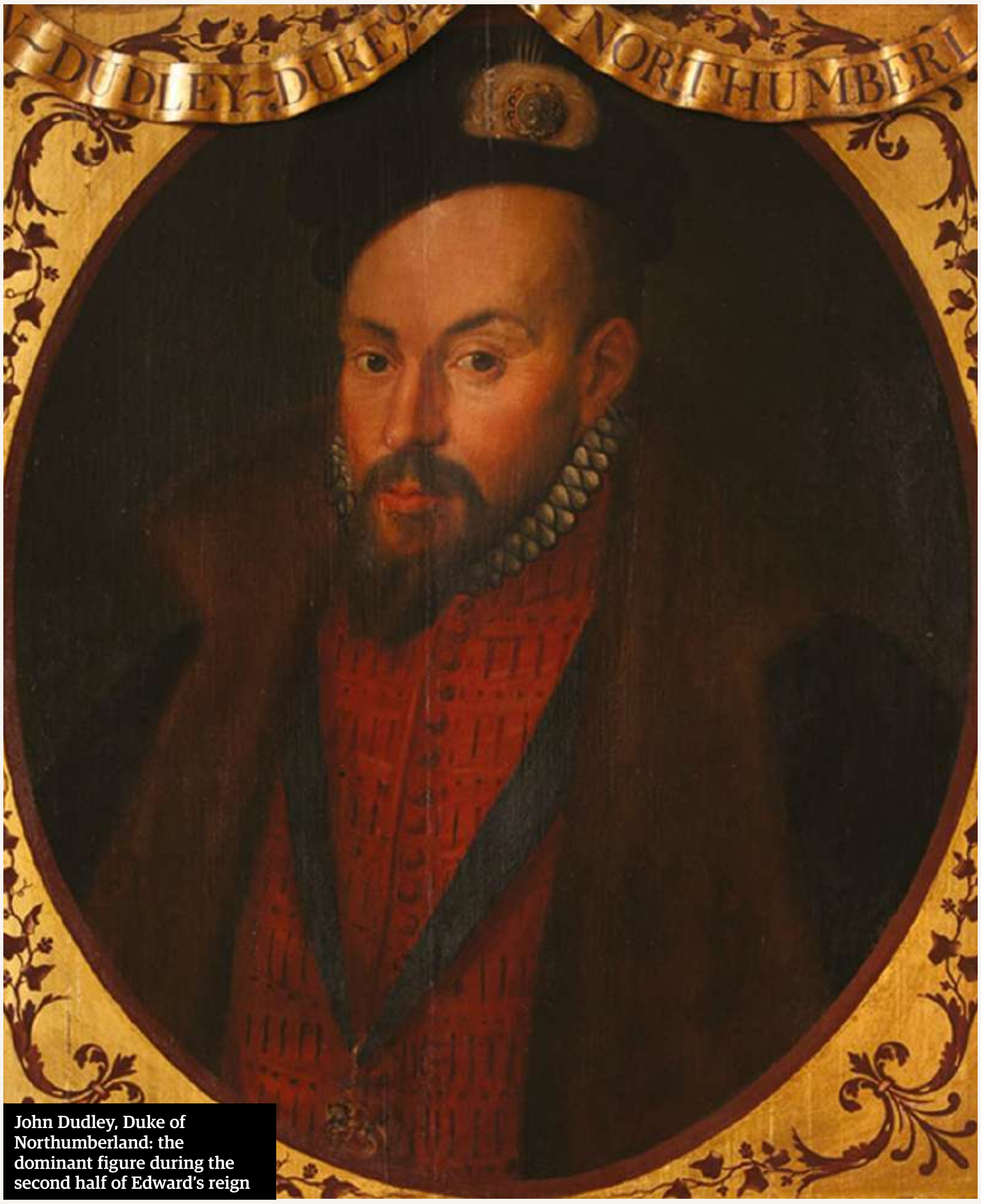
Written by Jon Wright

When Edward VI ascended to the English throne in 1547 daunting responsibilities and expectations were immediately placed upon his shoulders. The religious changes enacted by Henry VIII had unleashed turmoil, but for those of more radical religious sensibilities, they were only a meagre beginning to the vital work of reformation. William Thomas, future clerk of the Privy Council, pointed to the biblical example of Solomon, who had completed the temple at Jerusalem, an achievement "not granted to David [Solomon's father] in the time of his life". In similar fashion, Edward "shall with no less perfection reform the true Church of Christ, not permitted by his father to be finished".

The doctrinal and liturgical changes wrought over the next six years would transform England's devotional landscape, and this would have momentous consequences for Elizabeth I. The Edwardine religious settlement would be seen by many as a benchmark: any retreat from its rubrics would be perceived as backsliding.

Edward's reign bequeathed other legacies, and provided other lessons, for Elizabeth's regime. Chief among them was a reminder of the perils of factionalism. Such squabbles at the heart of government were not slow to emerge in 1547. The transfer of power to Edward proceeded without a hitch, but by the terms of Henry VIII's will a regency council was to be installed to govern while Edward remained a child. This plan was swiftly overturned and Edward's uncle, Edward Seymour, the Earl of Hertford, assumed the position of Lord Protector and Guardian of the King's Person. This was not necessarily a gross subversion of Henry's wishes, since the old king had certainly expected Seymour to take the lead in overseeing Edward's government. Nonetheless, Seymour's rivals were outraged and the Lord Protector's bullish approach to politics – trampling down enemies and issuing endless proclamations – created deep divisions.

Seymour, who was elevated to the dukedom of Somerset in February 1547, also succeeded in infuriating his brother, Thomas. Thomas was Edward's uncle too, and he resented being excluded from a key role in his nephew's regime. Somerset's chief adversary, John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, gleefully exploited the fraternal rift. He encouraged Thomas Seymour to demand the position of Guardian of the King's Person, a role that brought with it control of the royal household. Somerset flatly refused and further alienated his brother by handing the key position of Chief Gentleman of the Privy Chamber to Sir Michael Stanhope. A rather bizarre scenario now developed, in which Thomas Seymour surreptitiously gained access to the king's apartments, even going so far as to leave notes and pocket money for Edward.



John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland: the dominant figure during the second half of Edward's reign

> "Edward's reign bequeathed other legacies, and provided other lessons, for Elizabeth's regime"

Relations between the brothers continued to sour, and Thomas had embarked upon a downward political trajectory. His misguided dalliances with Princess Elizabeth hardly enhanced his reputation, and his penchant for fomenting trouble in the corridors of power culminated in his execution in March 1549.

Through these years, Somerset did not cover himself in glory in his role as Lord Protector. Launching a war against Scotland in September 1547 proved to be a disastrous mistake. The goal – forcing a marriage between Edward and Mary Stuart – made some sense, but it inevitably offended the French and war was soon being fought on two fronts. This was a martial luxury that England could ill afford. Since the mid-1540s Henry VIII had allowed the debasement of the currency and inflation had spiralled out of control. Between 1544 and 1551, for example, prices in

London had risen by almost 90 per cent. Just as importantly, the religious policies of the new regime had stirred up deep antagonisms: rebuilding the temple turned out to be a delicate labour.

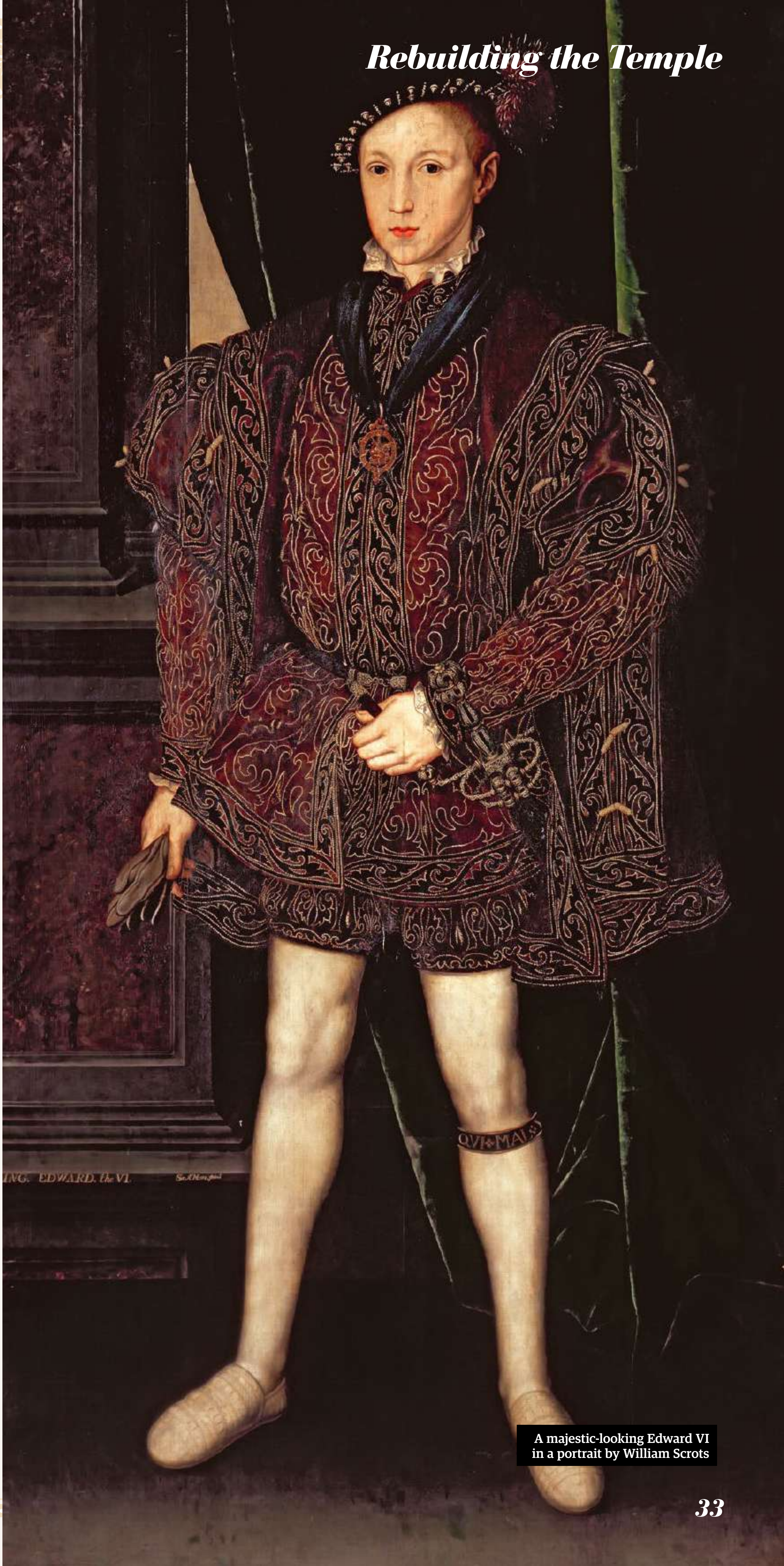
Even before Edward's coronation on 20 February 1547, some English Protestants seized the opportunity for radical action: episodes of iconoclasm were reported in churches across the country. The new regime officially frowned upon such activities, insisting that any change should be gradual and consensual. Unseemly and disruptive behaviour was not to be tolerated. When, for example, William Bowre and William Cloterbroke of Slimbridge, Gloucestershire, called the mass a "stinking idol" and announced that holy oil was only fit to "grease sheep and boots" they were chastised by the local ecclesiastical authorities. For all that, it was not hard to predict the kingdom's likely religious course.

In one of his sermons before Edward, Hugh Latimer pointedly compared Edward to Josiah, the "best king that ever was in Jewry", who had "reformed his father's ways" and "in his youth… took away all idolatry and purged his realm of it." Josiah had "turned all upside down", and Edward was expected to follow his example. There is a sense of Edward being spoon-fed a more radical brand of Protestantism, but his commitment to major reform - even from a young age - appears to have been genuine.

In a self-penned treatise on the papal supremacy he referred to the pope as the "true son of the devil" and "an Antichrist and abominable tyrant". When, in 1550, John Hooper was being confirmed as bishop of Gloucester, Edward struck out references to the saints with his own pen. Edward was no killjoy puritan - he rather enjoyed elaborate clothes, exquisite jewels and courtly masques - but he possessed, or was certainly moving towards, advanced theological tastes.

It was with his blessing, therefore, that the first religious legislation of the reign was rolled out. Statements of doctrine and religious practice, such as the 1547 Injunctions, took aim at many familiar aspects of worship. There were to be no candles placed before images, no palms on Palm Sunday, stained glass was to be removed, recitation of the rosary was forbidden, and parish processions led by a cross were to cease. Levels of compliance with these rubrics varied from place to place but, while not every town followed Shrewsbury's example of burning religious images, the impact of the lurch towards more thoroughgoing change can be traced in many churchwardens' accounts.

At Ludlow, in 1548, six shillings and eight pence were spent on taking down the rood and images, and fourpence was needed for the nails "to hang up cloths when the images were torn down". The



A majestic-looking Edward VI in a portrait by William Scrots

The architect of a new faith

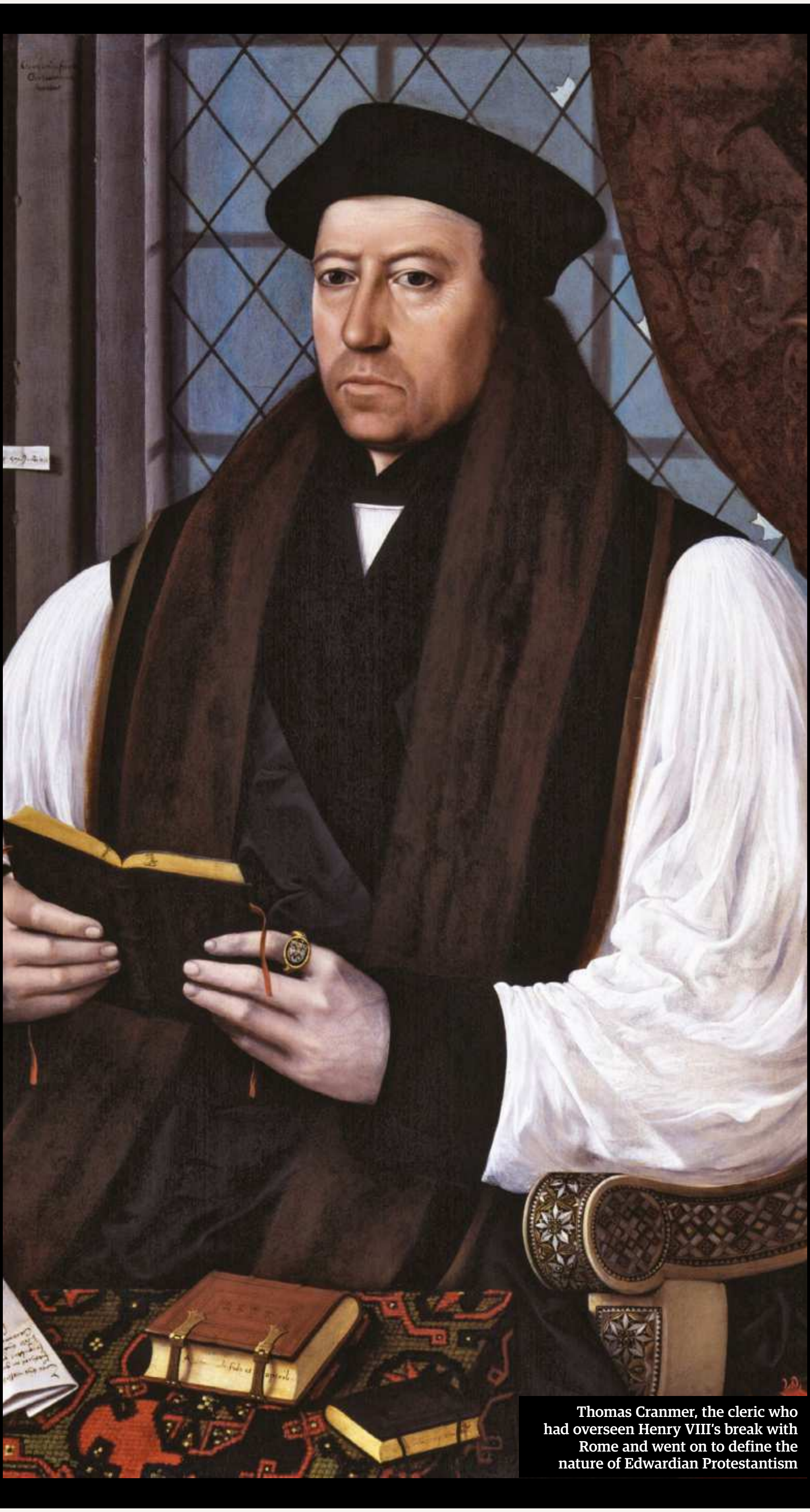
No one did more than Thomas Cranmer to define and carry through the religious revolution of Edward VI's reign

In 1527, following a sedate but accomplished academic career at Cambridge, Thomas Cranmer entered royal service. He played a pivotal role in defending Henry VIII's decision to annul the king's marriage to Catherine of Aragon and, as Archbishop of Canterbury, he puzzled over the theological controversies of his time.

It would be wrong to see Cranmer as an instinctive radical: his embrace of Protestantism was gradual and reflective. Nonetheless, by the time of Edward's accession he was primed to make dramatic changes to England's devotional landscape. His public acknowledgement of his wife (undermining Catholic notions of clerical celibacy) and the sporting of a beard (a tell-tale sign of reform-mindedness at the time) symbolised his progressive intentions.

Many of the reign's religious changes stemmed directly from Cranmer's pen and, along the way, he found time to produce sophisticated theological works, notably concerning the Eucharist. At the same time, Cranmer was averse to any radicalism that outstripped his own, and he dealt very harshly with groups such as the Anabaptists.

The arrival of Mary Tudor was always destined to spell disaster for Cranmer. He was swiftly arrested for his support of Lady Jane Grey and a subsequent prosecution for heresy dragged on for many years. He would be forced to watch the burnings of his fellow Protestants, Nicholas Ridley and Hugh Latimer, at Oxford and undergo endless interrogations. Cranmer veered between moments of resistance and submission, recanting some of his beliefs and then reversing his decisions, and he died bravely at the stake in March 1556.



Thomas Cranmer, the cleric who had overseen Henry VIII's break with Rome and went on to define the nature of Edwardian Protestantism books were at least brought closer to balance when 18 pence was received as a result of the sale of an image of St George that had stood in the chapel for countless generations.

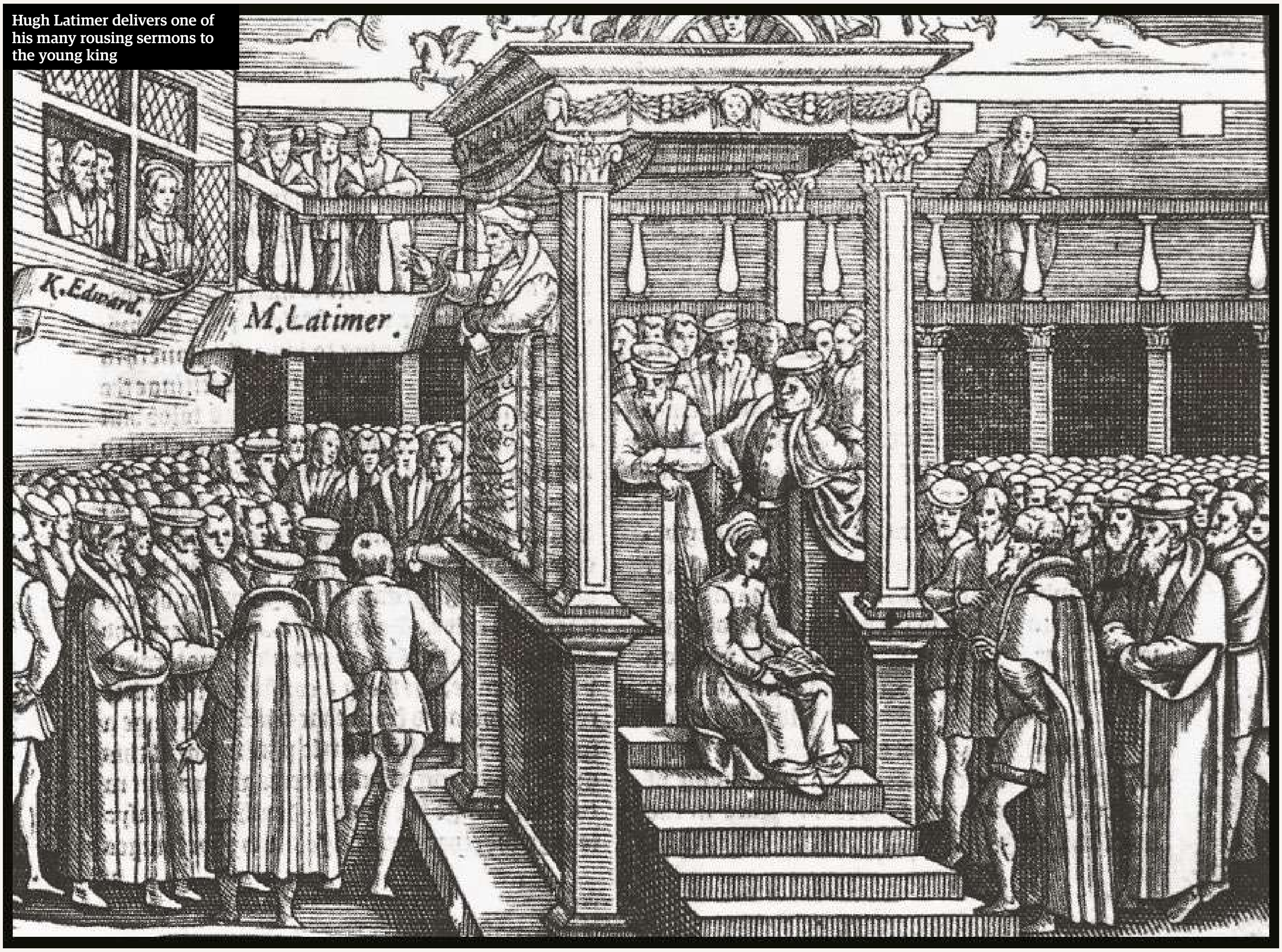
In December 1547, the kingdom's chantries came under attack and, with them, the whole concept of purgatory. By March 1548 a new "order for the communion" was announcing that making confession before receipt of the Eucharist was no longer obligatory and, in 1549, a new *Book of Common Prayer* arrived. The pace of change was too much for some to stomach, not least in the West Country, where the imposition of services in English struck a particularly sensitive nerve. In 1547 the royal agent William Body toured the region and his overzealous behaviour made the locals fear that a seizure of precious church belongings was planned. Body returned in the following year and was killed by a mob at Helston, Cornwall. This was merely the prelude to one of the 16th-century's most alarming popular uprisings.

> "Such strident words could not disguise the fact that many of Edward's subjects were shocked by the scale of religious change"

In 1549, rebels gathered in Devon and Cornwall and made little secret of their motivations. Walking under banners depicting the five wounds of Christ, they demanded that "images be set up again in every church" and insisted that "we will have the mass in Latin as was before". Around 2,000 of them laid siege to Exeter and, before too long, the city's malnourished inhabitants were complaining of "the continual barkings of their hungry bellies".

The siege was eventually lifted by royal troops and, while most participants in the rebellion were pardoned, some of the ringleaders suffered gruesome fates. Robert Welsh, vicar of St Thomas' Church, was executed on gallows specially erected on the church tower, with "a sacring bell, a pair of beads, and such other popish trash hanged about him". His remains were left there to rot until 1543 in order to provide a dire warning to any would-be dissenters of the punishments they would face.

One of the pillars of the Edwardian regime, the scholar John Cheke, bitterly denounced the rebels. "You pretend," Cheke wrote, "that partly for God's cause and partly for the commonwealth's sake you rise," but this was a sham. The rebels were "like a bile in the body" set on "outrageous and detestable mischief," and acting like "thieves, shire-spoilers, and utter destroyers of all kind of families". Such strident words could not disguise the fact that many of Edward's subjects were shocked by the scale of religious change.


K. Edward.
M. Latimer.

Hugh Latimer delivers one of his many rousing sermons to the young king

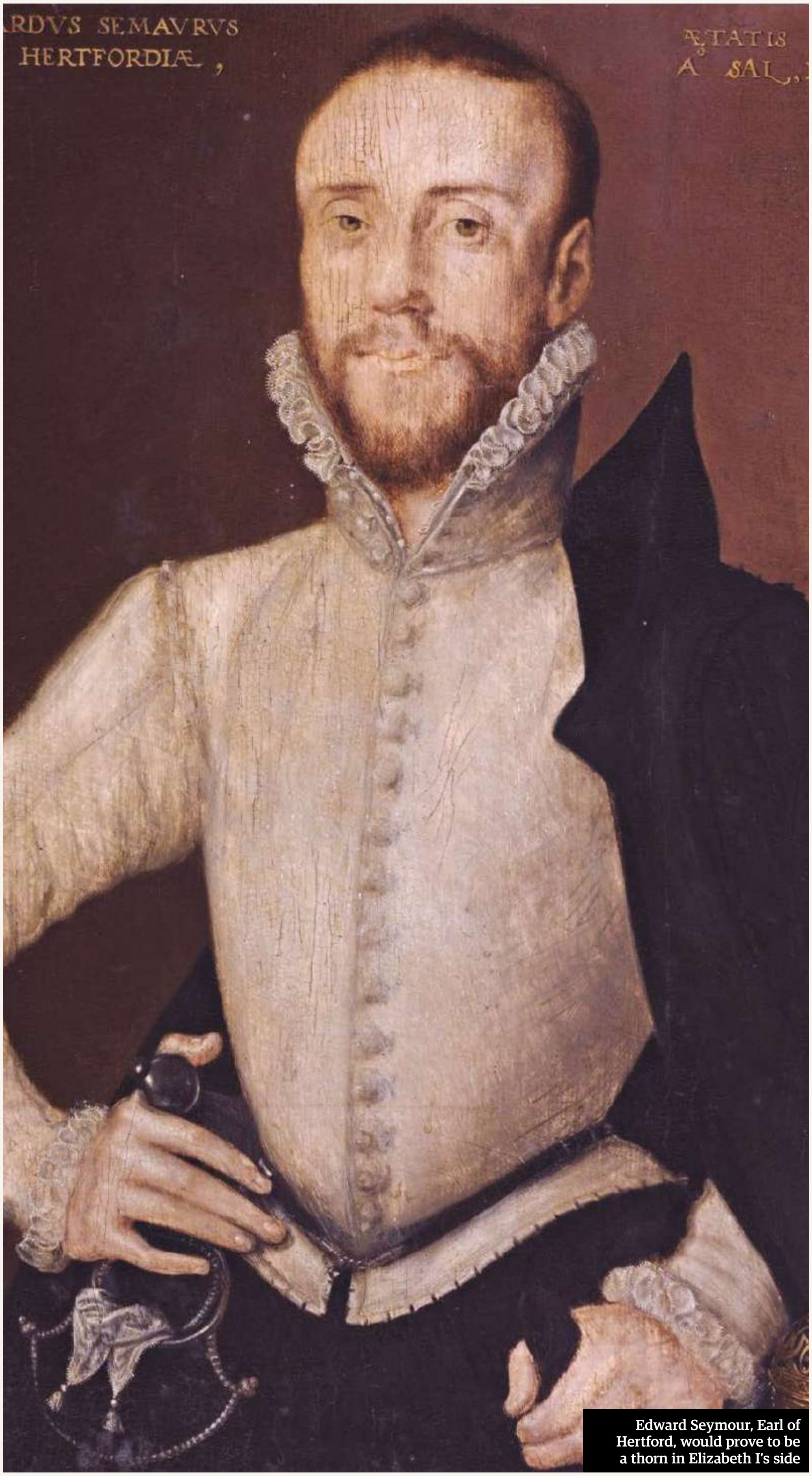
A changing of the guard

It is interesting to wonder what Princess Elizabeth made of the religious reforms during Edward's first years on the throne. As future events would show, Elizabeth subscribed to a moderate version of Protestantism, and at this stage she was greatly influenced by the gentle evangelical vision of Catherine Parr, in whose company she had spent a great deal of time. In any event, Elizabeth registered no protests and, unlike her half-sister, was not perceived as especially troublesome. Mary, by contrast, would cause the regime endless headaches by insisting on her right to celebrate the Catholic mass in private and indulging in provocative actions such as riding to Westminster with her entire retinue wearing rosaries.

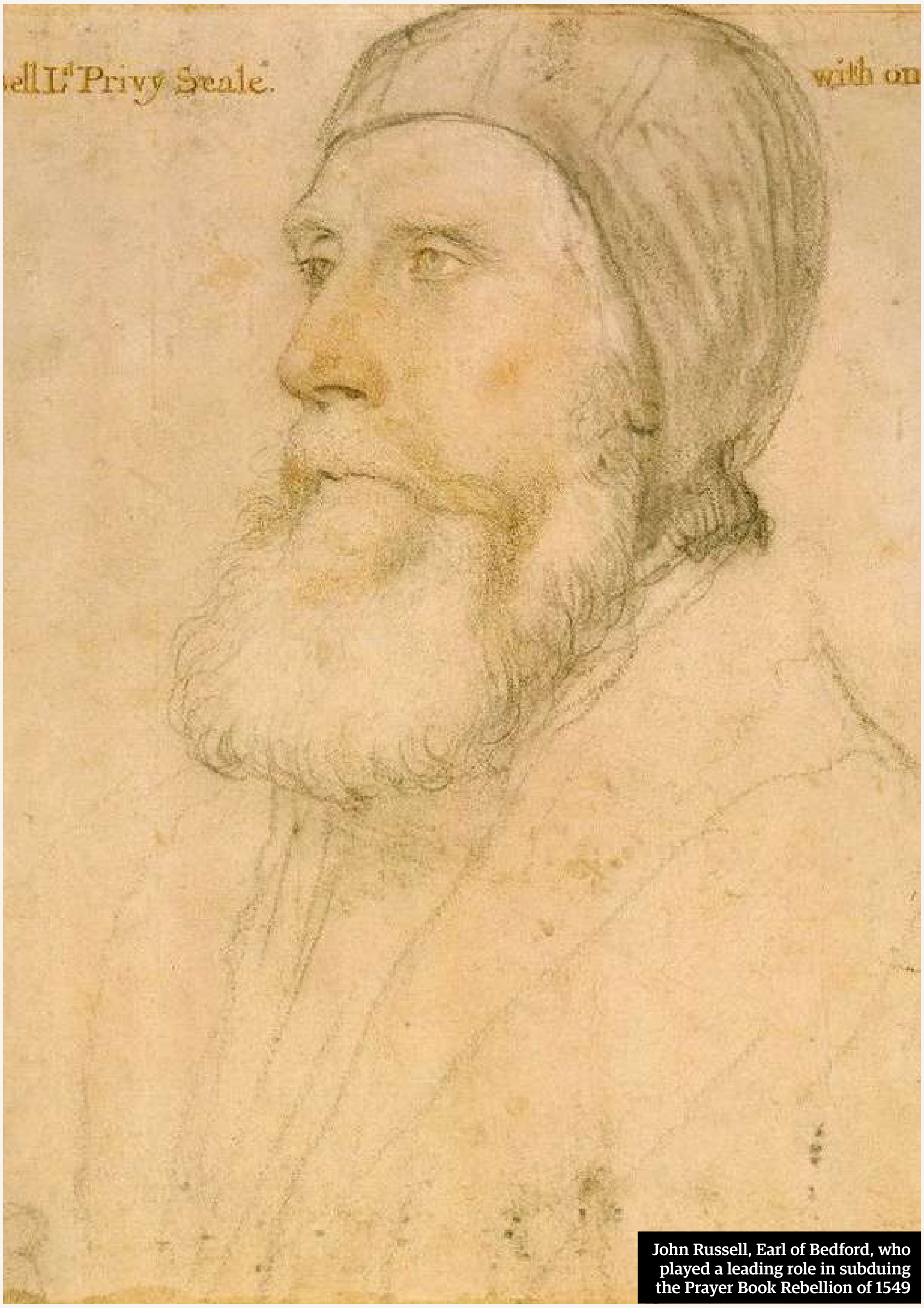
What we know for certain is that the so-called Prayer Book Rebellion inflicted severe damage on Somerset's administration. Moreover, the rising in the West Country was only one of many mass protests launched in 1549. People in Wiltshire, Lincolnshire, Kent, Essex, Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire, and Yorkshire also rose up, though in these cases social and economic grievances were the main catalyst. By any measure, 1549 was one of the most perilous years of the entire Tudor era, and some of the rebellions, notably the protests in Norfolk under the leadership of Robert Kett and his allies, helped to convince the regime that Somerset could no longer be trusted to guide the ship of state. Fearing a coup, Somerset retreated to Windsor, with Edward in tow, but the game was soon up and Somerset was arrested on 11 October 1549.

Somerset's replacement was his long-time rival John Dudley, Earl of Warwick (raised to the dukedom of Northumberland in 1551). Northumberland did not adopt the title of Lord Protector, serving instead as Lord President of the Council, but his grip on power was no less firm. He packed the council and the royal household with his allies and, while Somerset was initially allowed to re-enter royal service, the duke's machinations (whether real or imagined) led to his execution in early 1552. Courtly culture shifted

> "In any event, Elizabeth registered no protests and, unlike her sister, was not perceived as especially troublesome"



Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, would prove to be a thorn in Elizabeth I's side



John Russell, Earl of Bedford, who played a leading role in subduing the Prayer Book Rebellion of 1549

under Northumberland. Fear of rebellion and dissent created a mood that sometimes bordered on paranoia, and royal households became heavily militarised. Northumberland did, however, secure some victories: bringing an end to the ruinous wars and making some, albeit sluggish, efforts to improve the royal finances. He also saw the wisdom in allowing the king a more substantial role in government. Edward's precociousness could not be ignored. During the reign his educational achievements continued: he progressed readily from Latin to Greek, mastering complex texts, and showed interest in topics as diverse as music, astronomy and mathematics. He was also entirely capable of understanding the inner workings of his administration. Northumberland deftly allowed the king to contribute to proceedings – set-piece speeches were made by Edward during meetings of the Privy Council, for example – while reserving the real decision making for himself.

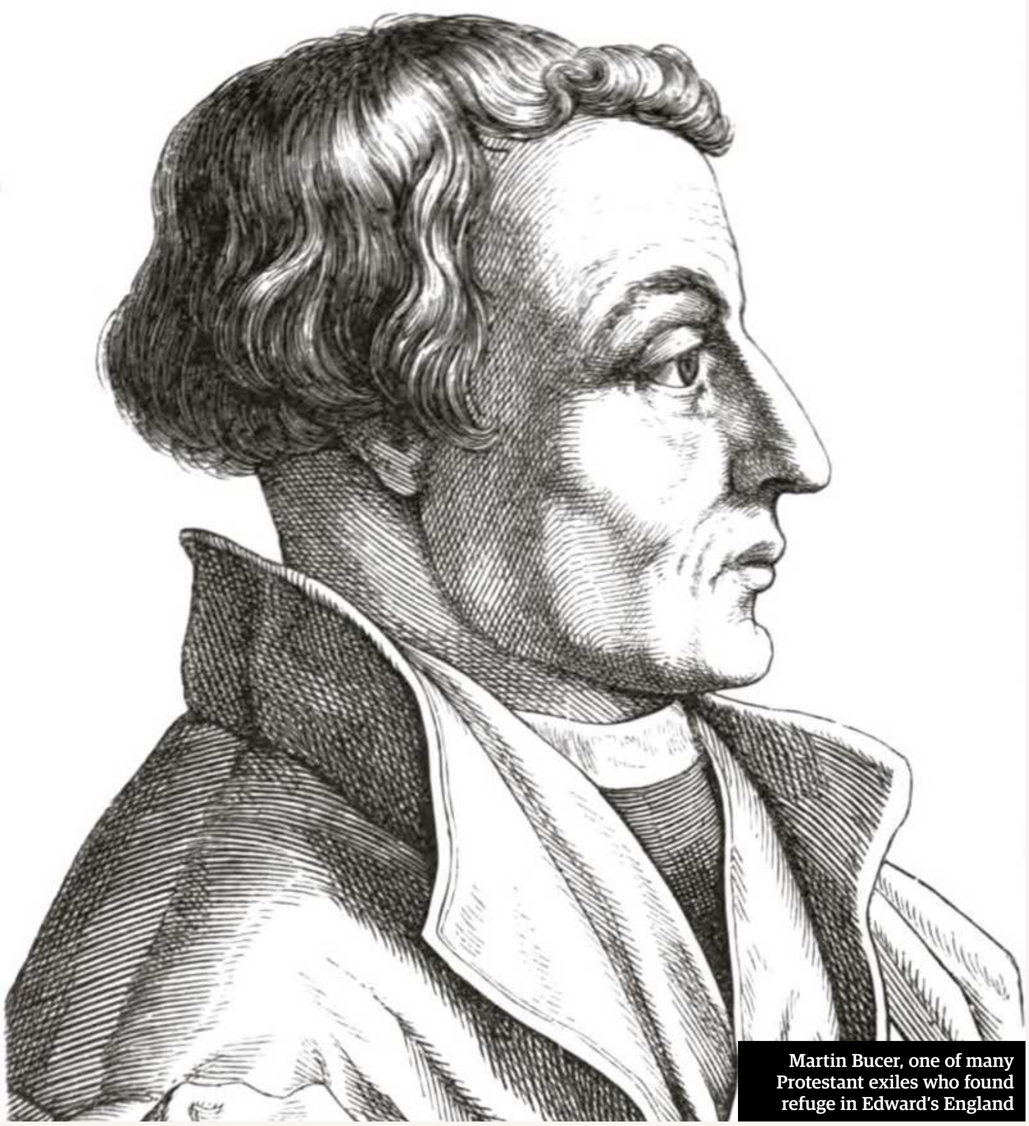
Through all this, the issue of religious change lost none of its potency. Northumberland's personal convictions are difficult to establish, but during his tenure England adopted an increasingly overt Protestant identity. There would be purges of conservative clergy (several bishops who refused to accept the 1549 Prayer Book were removed), and under the stewardship of Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, liturgical and theological change moved on apace.

> "She spent much of her time at her favourite residence, Hatfield House, and enjoyed the services of a large household"

In 1550, altars began to be replaced by wooden communion tables and a new *Book of Common Prayer*, issued in 1552, put greater distance between England and its Catholic past. There were to be no prayers to ease the path of souls through purgatory, ordinary bread was to be used instead of wafers at communion, and those who partook of that ceremony were advised to 'take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee'. The concept of transubstantiation, whereby the Eucharistic bread and wine transformed into the body and blood of Christ, was abandoned.

The Forty Two Articles of 1553 made the Church's doctrinal positions abundantly clear. Protestant staples such as predestination and justification by faith alone were trumpeted, while the 'sacrifices of the mass' were denounced as 'dangerous deceits'. England now positioned itself as one of the safe harbours of a trans-European Protestantism, a fact hammered home by the arrival of eminent refugees from the continent such as Martin Bucer, Bernardino Ochino and Peter Martyr Vermigli. The reforms did not go far enough for everyone, and concerns about traces of the Catholic past – using the sign of the cross, elaborate priestly vestments, and kneeling at communion – would resurface during Elizabeth's reign, but England's Protestant trajectory seemed assured.

During these years Elizabeth did not play a particularly significant role in national politics. She spent much of her time at her favourite residence, Hatfield House, and enjoyed the services of a large household (140 strong at its height) and the fruits of a generous income. She had been granted an annual stipend of £3,000 by Henry VIII's will, and, after some delay, this was provided in the form of properties scattered across the country, which made Elizabeth one of England's wealthiest



Martin Bucer, one of many Protestant exiles who found refuge in Edward's England

> "Perhaps because of the Seymour scandal, Elizabeth attempted to portray herself as a woman of the utmost propriety"

landowners. Her educational efforts were greatly enhanced by the involvement of Roger Ascham, who reported that "from the age of sixteen [Elizabeth] was unsurpassed in gravity for her age, and in a cheerful alacrity of mind that was wonderful to behold". Betraying the prejudices of his time, Ascham boasted that the princess' "mind has no woman's weakness", noting that "she talks French and Italian as well as she does English" and "talked to me well in Latin, moderately in Greek."

Perhaps because of the Seymour scandal, Elizabeth attempted to portray herself as a woman of the utmost propriety. She showed little interest in fancy frocks or costly jewels, and according to John Aylmer she dressed down at even the most lavish events. When Mary of Guise visited court in 1551 all the ladies of the household opted for the most fashionable 'curled and double-curled' hairstyles, but Elizabeth 'kept her old maidenly shame-fastness'. The princess occasionally complained that she was not invited to court as regularly as she might have liked. In May 1549, she sent a portrait of herself to her brother and beseeched Edward "that when you shall look on my picture you will witsafe to think that as you have but the outward show of my body afore you, so my inward mind wisheth that the body itself were oftener in your presence".

In fact, Elizabeth was far from being isolated, and when she appeared at court she was always treated with the greatest respect. There appears to have been deep and genuine affection between Edward and his sister, and the only recurrent source of irritation for Elizabeth was the delicate issue of her possible marriage.

During Edward's rule various candidates emerged - including the Earl of Pembroke, the king of Denmark, the brother of the Duke of Guise, and the son of the Duke of Tuscany - but the rumours and negotiations came to nothing. All told, the regime, under Northumberland's leadership, had no overwhelming reason to resent or look askance at Elizabeth for most of the reign, but all this was set to change when Edward fell dangerously ill and the perennially troublesome issue of the succession raised its head.

Devising the succession

In February 1553, Elizabeth sent a poignant letter to Edward VI. She had tried but failed to meet with him, and this, along with reports of the king's declining health, "moved me much and grieved me greatly". By March Edward was gravely ill, almost certainly suffering from tuberculosis, and the question of who should succeed him could hardly have been more urgent. Edward believed that if either Mary or Elizabeth came to the throne all progress in religious reform might be undermined, especially if they acquired a Catholic husband. Besides, they were, in a strict sense, illegitimate, since the marriages of both their mothers had been deemed invalid. One official pronouncement referred to the "several divorcements… whereby the said lady Mary as also the said lady Elizabeth to all intent and purposes are and clearly be disabled to ask, claim or challenge the said imperial crown". As Elizabeth later recalled, "they openly preached and set forth that my sister and I were bastards".

Edward's initial scheme was convoluted. The line of succession would include Frances Grey, Duchess of Suffolk, her three daughters, Jane, Katherine and Mary, and then Margaret Clifford, the daughter of Frances' sister. A male, Protestant heir would hopefully emerge from this line. Northumberland convinced Edward to simplify matters and make Jane Grey the focus of England's dynastic future. Self-interest played a part here, since Jane had recently married Northumberland's son, Guilford Dudley, but there is no reason to suppose Edward did not approve.

When Edward died on 6 July 1553, an unlikely new monarch was in the offing, and just four days later Lady Jane Grey was queen. Tudor history rarely took a predictable path, and with the supporters of the Princess Mary rallying in the provinces, England's future was far from settled. Before too long a Catholic monarch would be on the throne, Jane Grey would meet her maker, and Elizabeth would face five more years of peril.

Trouble in Norfolk: Kett's Rebellion

Among the many rebellions that convulsed England in 1549, none posed a greater threat than the uprising in Norfolk

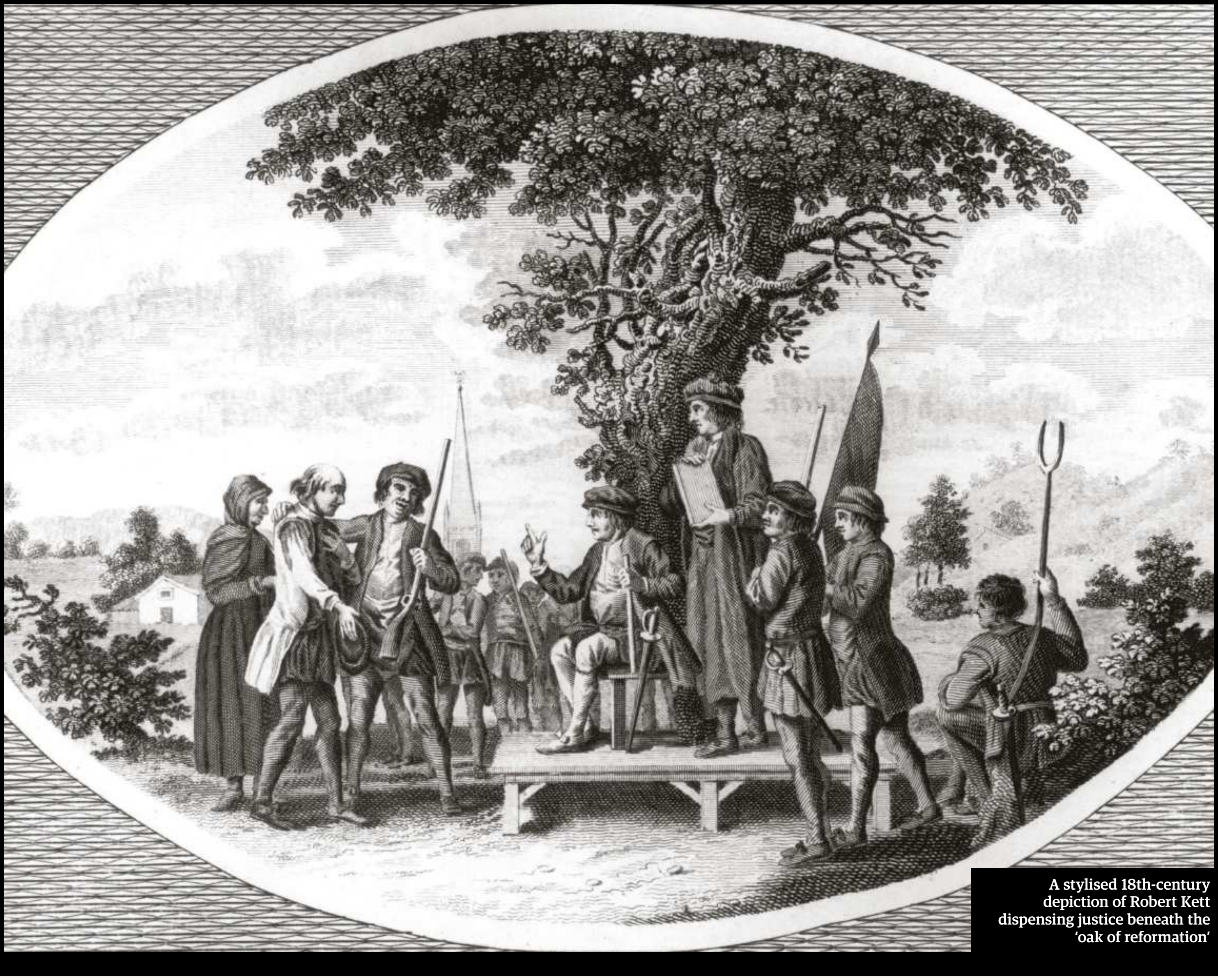
If the West Country rebels were inspired by religious disaffection, those in Norfolk were chiefly concerned with the kingdom's social and economic woes. As Lord Protector, the Duke of Somerset often sought to alleviate the impact of agricultural change, but his efforts could not placate the people of East Anglia.

Sheep and cattle farming had expanded, the policy of enclosing fields had created new divisions in the landscape, and common land had been given over to pasture. In June 1549, a resentful populace tore down hedges and found inspiration in stirring leaders such as Robert Kett.

A tanner and landowner from Wymondham, Kett was rather well-to-do, but he quickly adapted to the role of rabble-rouser. In early July he established a camp at Mousehold Heath above Norwich, and with 12,000 followers at his back he issued demands and sat in judgement on local dignitaries beneath the famous 'oak of reformation'.

In the hope of quelling the rebellion, Kett was repeatedly offered pardons, but he always refused. His quarrel, he insisted, was not with the king but with the outrageous policies of local officials. "He trusted that he needed not any pardon, since he had done nothing but that belonged to the duty of a true subject." He and his followers referred to themselves as the king's 'friends and deputies'.

Needless to say, the Edwardian regime did not agree, and troops under the Earl of Warwick routed the rebels at Dussindale on 27 August. Kett was captured and executed at Norwich on 7 December.



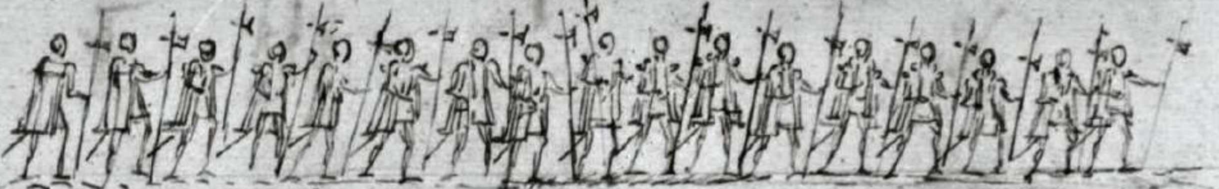
A stylised 18th-century depiction of Robert Kett dispensing justice beneath the 'oak of reformation'

Coronation Procession

Aged 25, Elizabeth became Queen and had the last Roman Catholic coronation of any British monarch. At 2pm the day before her coronation, Elizabeth made her royal entry and state procession from the Tower of London to the Palace of Westminster. Elizabeth was carried in a litter covered in white cloth of gold and lined with satin, which was carried by two mules and a line of footmen.

15 January 1559

The vj ladies rydinge upon palfreis followinge the Queenes litter next the palfrey



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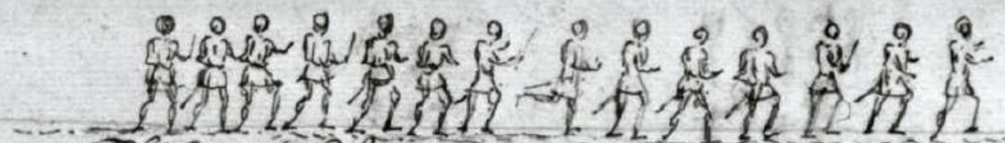

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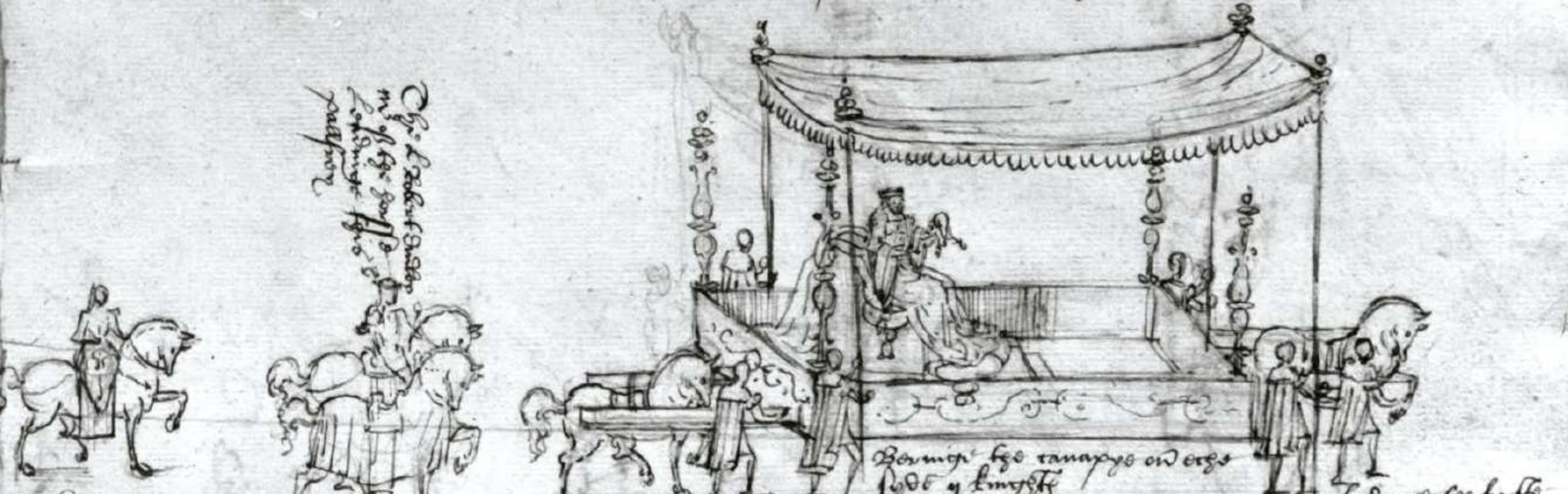

The L Robert Dudley
mr of the horse
leadinge the
palfray

of Honour

The palfrey
of honner

Ledinge ye 2d moyle
the L Giles paulet

Beringe the canapye on eche
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Ledinge the firste
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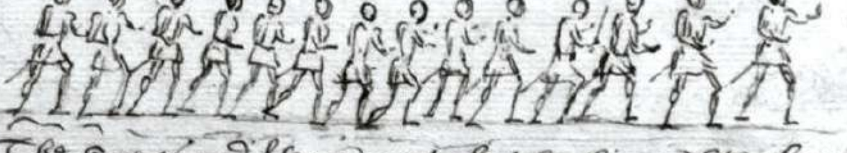

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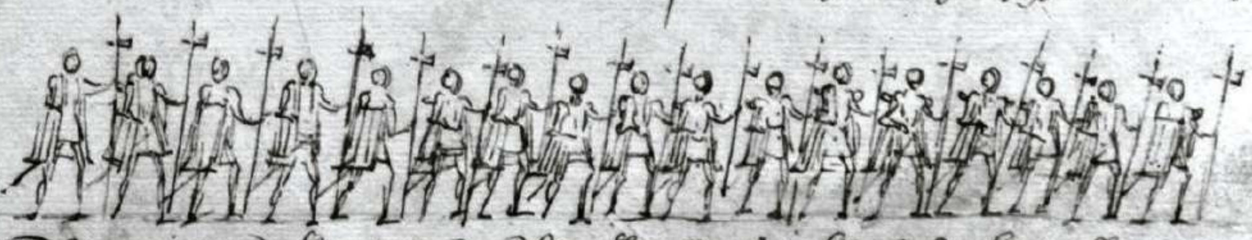

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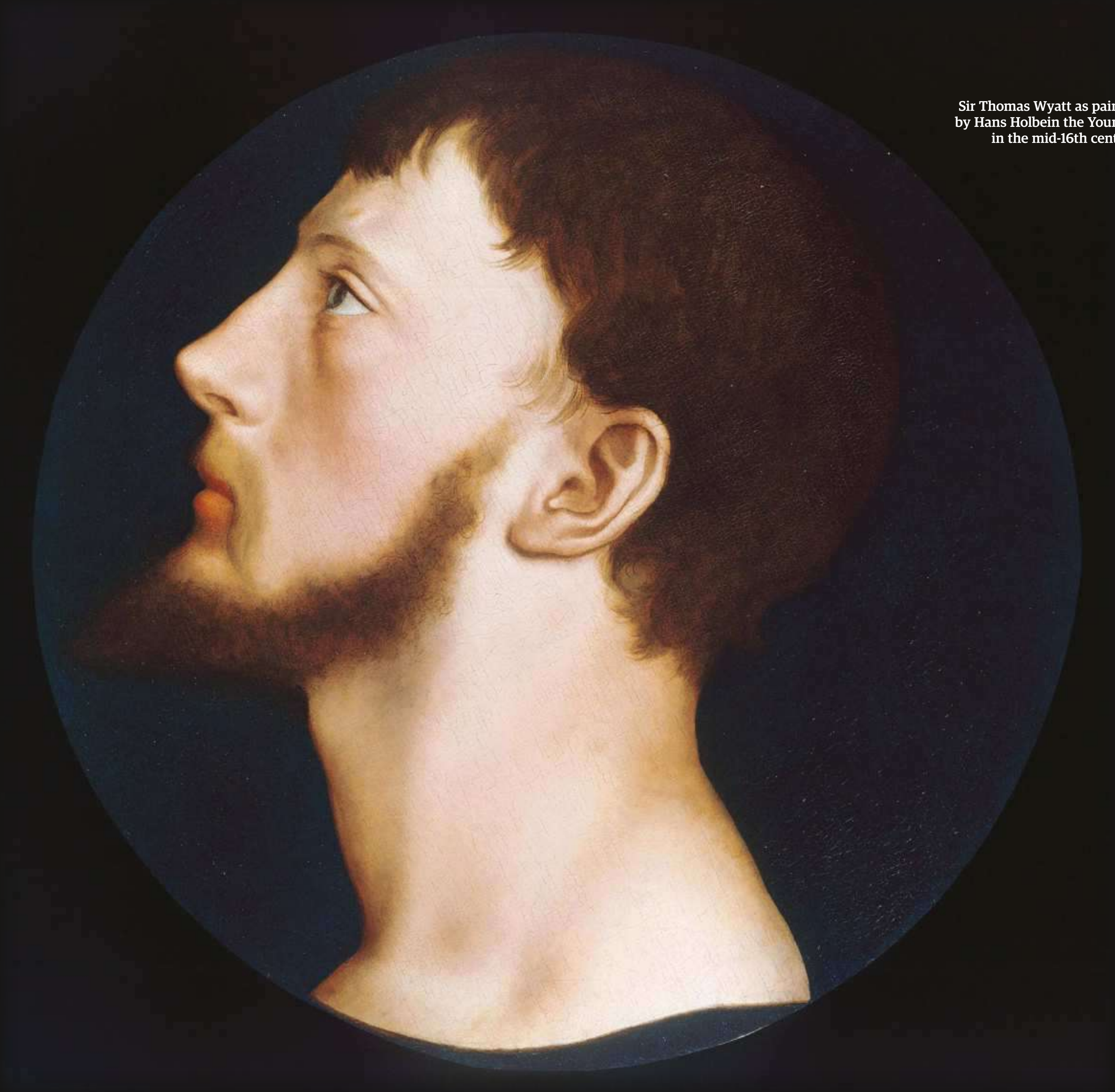


Sir Thomas Wyatt as painted by Hans Holbein the Younger in the mid-16th century

The Wyatt Rebellion of 1554

How a plot to overthrow Queen Mary I almost ended in the beheading of her sister, Princess Elizabeth

Written by Tom Garner

The 1550s were one of the most turbulent times of upheaval in English history. Europe was split between the old certainties of Roman Catholicism and the new reforms of Protestantism; England became a divided country. This was most keenly felt in the years 1547-58 when the state religion of the country changed three times. In the middle of this tumultuous decade, an age of kings, came a revolt that threatened the lives of three past, present and future queens. The failure of Wyatt's Rebellion of 1554 would have profound but unintended consequences for the course of English history.

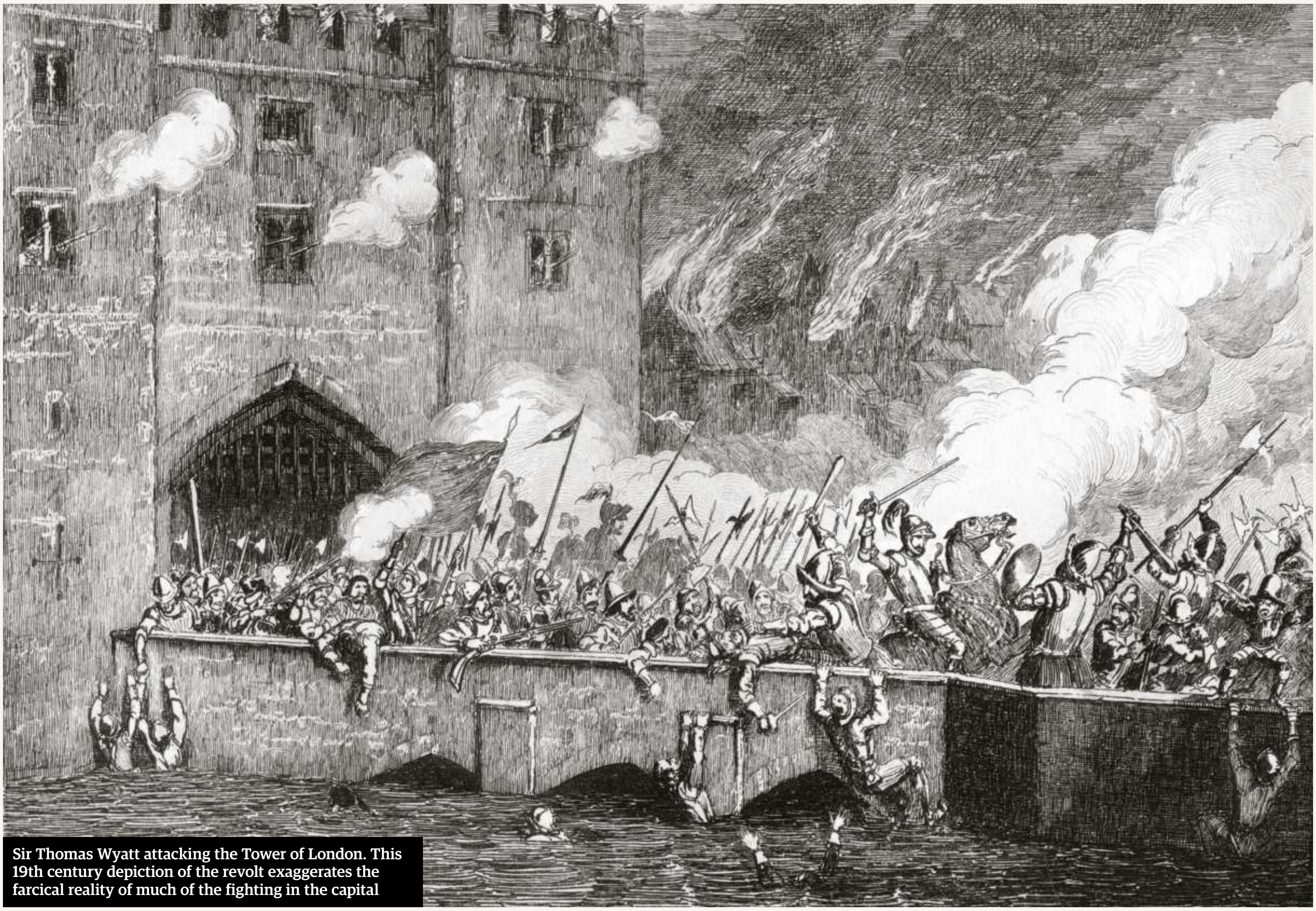
Although Henry VIII had broken with the papacy and established an independent Church of England, he remained a Catholic and the country largely followed suit. However, his nine-year-old son and successor, Edward VI, and his governors sought to change that.

Despite being a child, Edward was a zealous Protestant and under his rule England became a truly Protestant nation for the first time. While this may not seem that important in today's modern society, in the 16th century it was an entirely new world order. Catholicism had been uncontested for over 1,000 years and its changing character didn't just change people's spiritual beliefs but also their sense of national identity. The independence of the Church of England engendered a new English nationalism – and with it a heightened fear of foreigners, particularly Catholics.

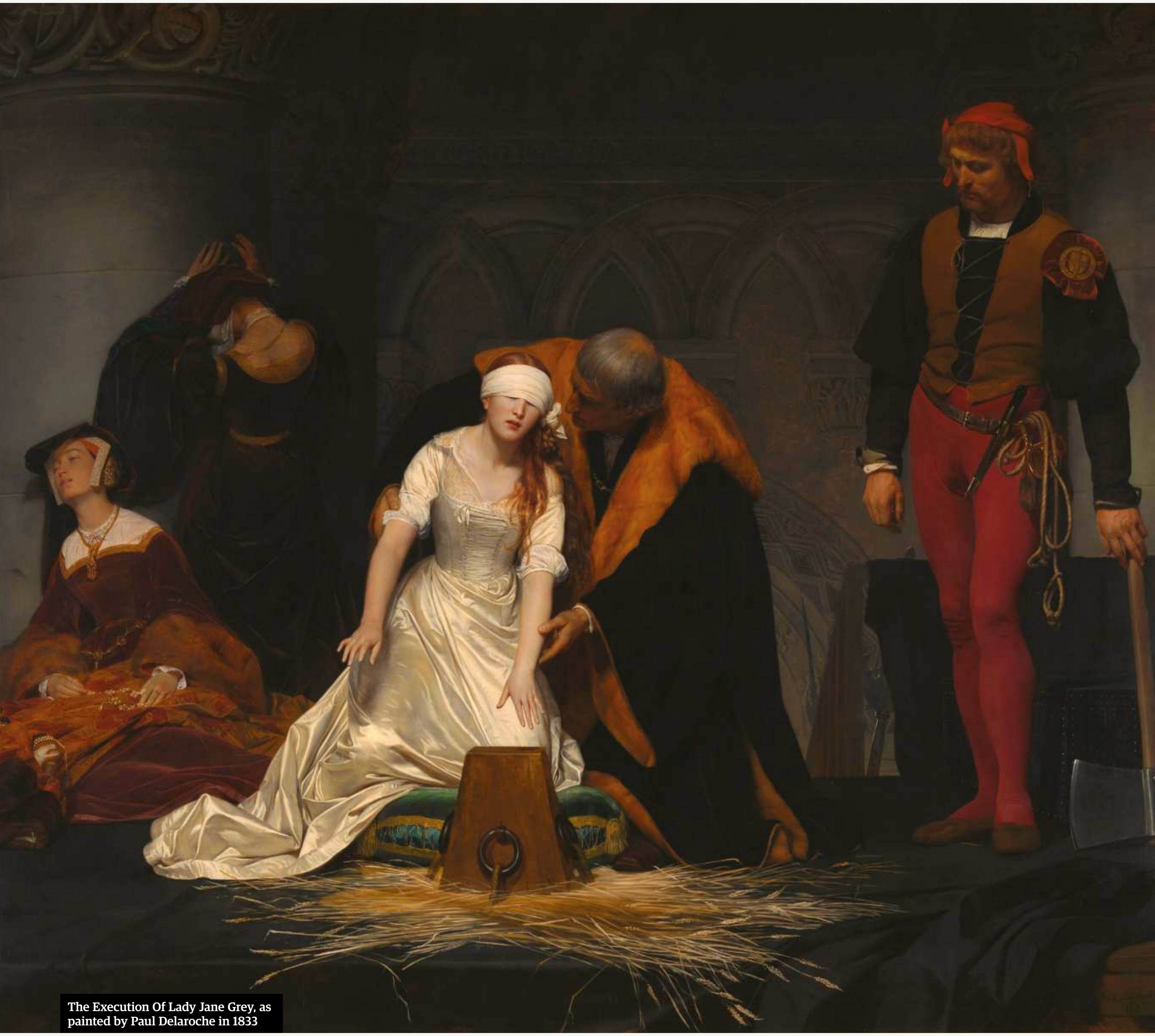
Nonetheless, Edward's Protestantism did not reflect the beliefs of the generally conservative population and many remained Catholics, including Edward's older half-sister Princess Mary. Mary was half-Spanish through her mother, Catherine of Aragon, and was devoutly Catholic and politically close to her cousin Charles V, king of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor. Charles was an inveterate opponent of the Reformation and consequently Edward distrusted Mary – but he had a problem. Until he married and produced an heir, Mary would inherit the throne and could not be ignored. The two warily coexisted until the political situation dramatically changed when Edward fell ill and died at the age of 15 in 1553. There was suddenly a power vacuum to be filled.

Before he died, on 6 July, Edward had barred (possibly under duress) Mary and other his half-sister Elizabeth from the succession. Although Elizabeth was a Protestant, her father, Henry VIII, had declared her illegitimate and Edward upheld that principle. Edward and his regent, the Duke of Northumberland, 'agreed' that his cousin Lady Jane Grey should inherit throne. Jane famously ruled as queen for only nine days between 10-19 July with Northumberland running the government. Mary was quick to act and in a popular movement she was declared queen by the Privy Council and entered London on 3 August. Jane was charged with treason and imprisoned in the Tower of London while Northumberland was executed.

"Europe was split between the old certainties of Roman Catholicism and the new reforms of Protestantism"



Sir Thomas Wyatt attacking the Tower of London. This 19th century depiction of the revolt exaggerates the farcical reality of much of the fighting in the capital



The Execution Of Lady Jane Grey, as painted by Paul Delaroche in 1833

For the first time in its history there was an undisputed queen of England, but Mary immediately sought to undo the reforms of her father and brother and changed the nation's religion back to Catholicism. This might have been acceptable to the silent majority who were still secret Catholics, but the Reformation had stirred up nationalist sentiments against foreigners and this caused significant problems in Mary's next political move: her forthcoming nuptials.

Mary felt that to spiritually secure her kingdom she had to marry a fellow Catholic and produce Catholic heirs. On 16 November 1553, a Parliamentary delegation had urged Mary to marry an English husband but the queen had her sights set overseas and rumours abounded that she was going to marry the zealously Catholic Philip II of Spain, the heir of Charles V. On 26 November, prominent men met at the house of Jane's father, Henry, Duke of Suffolk, and planned to prevent a foreign royal marriage. Among the conspirators were Sir James Croft, Edward Courtenay, Earl of Devon, Suffolk and Sir Thomas Wyatt.

Devon was chosen as the figurehead of a proposed national armed rebellion that would converge upon London. The precise aims of the rebellion are unclear; it has been hypothesised that they simply wanted to stop the Spanish marriage, or to depose Mary and install Elizabeth as queen, with Devon as her prospective husband.

"Wyatt was renowned as a brave soldier and skilled in discipline and fortifications"

The latter option assumed there would be popular support for a Protestant restoration but the plotters themselves were uncertain reformers. Of all of them, only Edward VI's clerk of the Privy Council, William Thomas, was a committed Protestant; this ambiguity meant the coming rebellion would be nationalistic in tone.

Of the conspirators, it would be Sir Thomas Wyatt the Younger who would become the most prominent. Born circa 1521, Wyatt emerged as a soldier during the last years of Henry VIII's reign. He had been imprisoned for a month in 1543 for taking part in an aristocratic rampage in London but the government put his aggressive behaviour to good use. In June 1544, he was commissioned to lead 100 men in battle against France. He was promoted to captain of the Boulogne garrison and was knighted in 1545.

Wyatt was renowned as a brave soldier and skilled in discipline and fortifications. In an attack on Hardelot Castle, he personally stormed the first gate, broke open the door, killed one of the watchmen and captured another two. He was praised for his, "hardiness, painfulness, circumspection and natural disposition to war," but there was an early warning that he was hotheaded and had a weakness for "too strong opinion".

For the rebellion, Wyatt was chosen to recruit soldiers in Kent, alongside other insurgencies in the country. Courtenay was to raise troops in Devon; Sir James Croft in Herefordshire; Suffolk in Midlands counties such as Leicestershire and Warwickshire. Once all the groups had been assembled the plan was to start the rebellion on 18 March 1554, then converge on London. The French ambassador was also involved and if it went well he promised money, equipment and, most importantly, soldiers who would attack the English colony of Calais and also land a force on the east coast of Scotland. This was by no means an amateurish plot but it almost immediately began to fall apart.

Courtenay lost his nerve and didn't travel to Devon to incite rebellion, choosing to remain at court. Word of the plot reached the Lord Chancellor Bishop Stephen Gardiner who interrogated Courtenay. The hapless earl gave away most of the details. The rebellion was now betrayed and most of the plans never took place with the notable exception of Thomas Wyatt's.

Wyatt began in Maidstone, Kent on 25 January 1554, much earlier than the proposed start of the uprising but in light of Courtenay's betrayal Wyatt felt there was no time to lose. He issued a proclamation that was read out in other Kentish towns that said, "For as much as it is now spread abroad and certainly by the Lord Chancellor and others of the queen's pleasure to marry with a stranger we therefore write unto you, because you be our friends, neighbours and Englishmen, that you will join with us, as we will with you unto death in this behalf." It continued, "We seek no harm to the queen, but better counsel and counsellors. Herein lie the health and wealth of us all."

Wyatt then proceeded to officially raise his standard and made his headquarters at Rochester. The government quickly heard of the Kent uprising and levied 600 troops in London to quell under the command of Thomas Howard, the octogenarian Duke of Norfolk. At first Norfolk's troops (known as 'Whitecoats') defeated a small rebel force at Wrotham but the next day his own men deserted him at the bridge into Rochester, claiming sympathy with the rebels and declaring, "We are Englishmen."

The defection of the Londoners boosted Wyatt's confidence and his rebel numbers to between 2-3,000 men, and he planned to slowly march on the capital. Wyatt's army entered Southwark on 3 February and paused there for three days but the moment when events appearing to be turning in his favour was when it began to unravel.

Most of Wyatt's allies came from a limited support base in Kent and, although much of the gentry were quietly sympathetic to his aims, they did not provide the necessary support while Queen Mary was gathering strength. She had been proactive in defending her position and went to London's Guildhall to exhort the Londoners to come to her aid and 20,000 men volunteered to act as a militia against the rebels. This was far more than Wyatt's force and he now faced a dilemma. Southwark was at the southern end of London Bridge but the bridge itself was strongly defended and all boats were kept on the north bank. At the same time, cannon fire from the Tower of London was damaging homes, making the inhabitants fearful and restless.

On 6 February, Wyatt moved away, crossed the bridge at Kingston and entered Hyde Park the next day where he had a minor skirmish with government forces. From the park the rebels moved east passing Charing Cross where some were beaten off and then along Fleet Street. As they marched they loudly claimed loyalty to the queen, which was met with bemusement by the citizens who looked out of their doorways. The government troops deliberately let Wyatt march on, luring him into a trap. At Ludgate the soldiers of Lord William Howard finally stopped the rebels and Wyatt was forced to retreat towards Temple Bar to face the cavalry of the earl of Pembroke.

After several fights, a herald appeared and asked Wyatt to surrender rather than cause more bloodshed. Wyatt, vastly outnumbered and betrayed, conceded and was taken to Whitehall, and then on to the Tower of London. About 40 rebels had been killed.

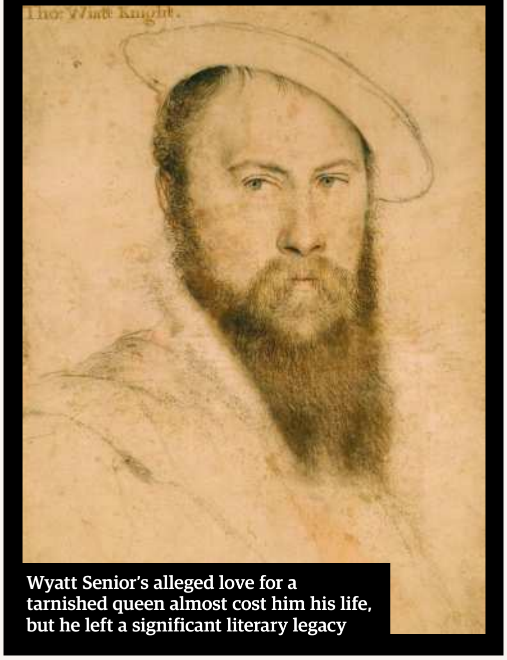
Sir Thomas Wyatt: the romantic poet

The rebel's father was a talented poet who almost died for the love of Anne Boleyn

Although Thomas Wyatt the Younger is only known to history for a failed rebellion his father (also Sir Thomas) left a more enduring legacy as a pioneering poet. Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-42) is credited with introducing the sonnet to England, and his poems reveal a sensitive, cultured man who depicted his romantic entanglements at the English court.

Most famously, Wyatt is rumoured to have fallen in love with Anne Boleyn. Their precise relationship is uncertain but Anne may have rejected his overtures because Henry VIII was courting her. In *Whoso List To Hunt* this thwarted love is possibly alluded to: "Graven in diamonds with letters plain/There is written her fair neck about/ 'Noli me tangere (Touch me not), Caesar's, I am.'"

In May 1536 Wyatt was imprisoned in the Tower of London for allegedly committing adultery with Anne and possibly witnessed her execution from his cell window. His anguish is reflected in a despairing poem that he wrote in captivity, "Alone, alone in prison strong/I wail my destiny...Toll on, thou passing bell/Ring out my doleful knell/Thy sound my death abroad will tell/For I must die/There is no remedy." He was eventually released and his poetry remains a lyrically human portrayal of Tudor life.

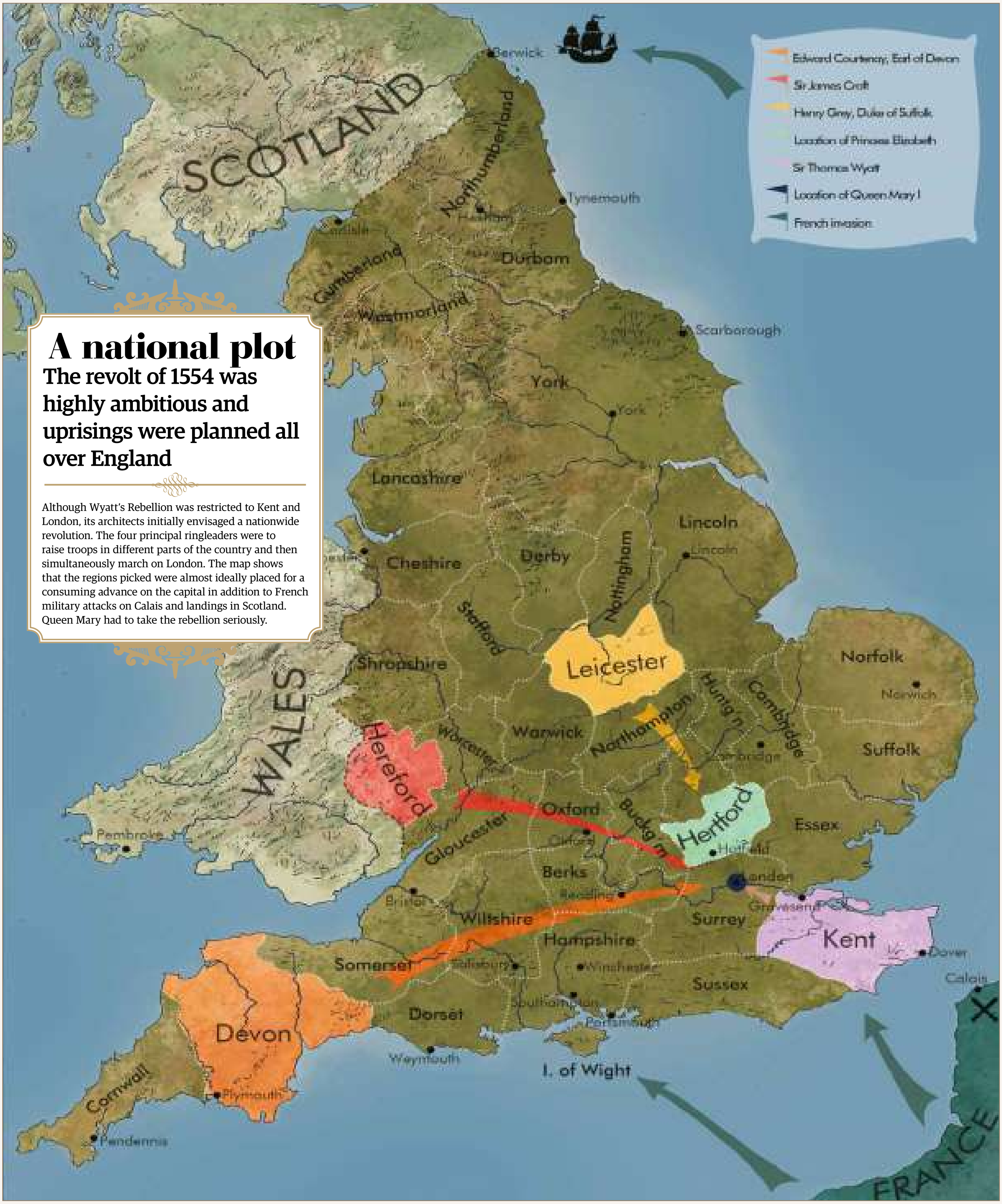

Thos Wiatt Knight.

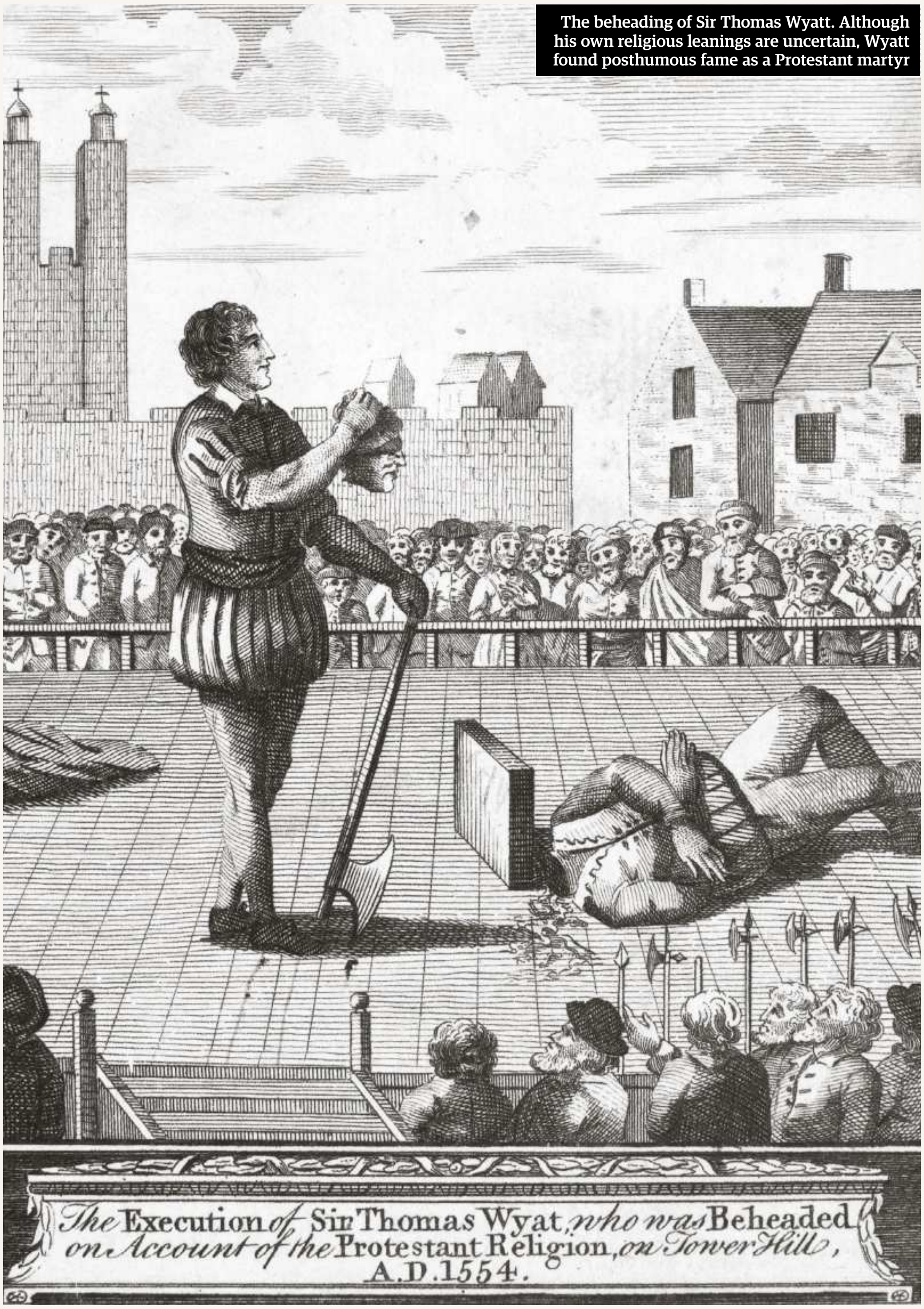
Wyatt Senior's alleged love for a tarnished queen almost cost him his life, but he left a significant literary legacy

A national plot

The revolt of 1554 was highly ambitious and uprisings were planned all over England

Although Wyatt's Rebellion was restricted to Kent and London, its architects initially envisaged a nationwide revolution. The four principal ringleaders were to raise troops in different parts of the country and then simultaneously march on London. The map shows that the regions picked were almost ideally placed for a consuming advance on the capital in addition to French military attacks on Calais and landings in Scotland. Queen Mary had to take the rebellion seriously.


Edward Courtenay, Earl of Devon
Sir James Croft
Henry Grey, Duke of Suffolk
Location of Princess Elizabeth
Sir Thomas Wyatt
Location of Queen Mary I
French invasion
SCOTLAND
Berwick
Northumberland
Tynemouth
Carlisle
Durham
Cumberland
Westmorland
Scarborough
York
York
Lancashire
Lincoln
Lincoln
Cheshire
Derby
Nottingham
Stafford
Leicester
Shropshire
WALES
Norfolk
Norwich
Hunts
Cambridge
Northampton
Warwick
Worcester
Hereford
Suffolk
Cambridge
Oxford
Bucks
Hertford
Hatfield
Essex
Pembroke
Gloucester
Oxford
Berks
London
Reading
Bristol
Gravesend
Wiltshire
Surrey
Kent
Dover
Hampshire
Somerset
Salisbury
Winchester
Sussex
Calais
Southampton
Dorset
Portsmouth
Devon
Weymouth
I. of Wight
Cornwall
Plymouth
Pendennis
FRANCE


The Execution of Sir Thomas Wyat, who was Beheaded on Account of the Protestant Religion, on Tower Hill, A.D. 1554.

The beheading of Sir Thomas Wyatt. Although his own religious leanings are uncertain, Wyatt found posthumous fame as a Protestant martyr

"Her survival looked doubtful but she was inadvertently rescued through the actions of Thomas Wyatt"

Although the rebellion was over, the political ramifications intensified, with the focus now turning to Lady Jane Grey. Her father, the Duke of Suffolk, had been one of key conspirators in the uprising and his actions sealed her fate. Although she had taken no part in the revolt, her existence as a figurehead for Protestant discontent made her dangerous to the Catholic state. Mary sentenced her cousin to death. In a parting blow, she attempted to force Jane to convert to Catholicism to save her soul but the devoutly Protestant Jane refused.

On 12 February 1554, both Jane and her husband Guildford, the son of Northumberland, were executed on Tower Hill. Jane suffered the horror of seeing her husband's decapitated corpse return from the scaffold before being beheaded. When she was blindfolded she struggled to find the block but she died bravely with her last words being "Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit." The killing of this intelligent 16-year old was a terrible act of judicial murder.

Attention now turned to Princess Elizabeth. On the same day of Jane's execution, Elizabeth was transported to London and arrived on 23 February. Her situation was dire as the conspirators had planned to marry her to Courtenay. The government tried to ascertain her role in the revolt and on 18 March she was taken from Whitehall and imprisoned in the Tower. Mary was now being advised that her half-sister was too dangerous to live and Elizabeth was lodged in the same rooms as Anne Boleyn had been before her execution. Her survival looked doubtful, but she was inadvertently rescued through the actions of Thomas Wyatt.

Wyatt had also been committed to the Tower and was tortured for information. He denied that he sought Mary's death and that his sole intention was "against the coming in of strangers and Spaniards and to abolish them out of this realm." Crucially he denied that Elizabeth had been involved in the plot.

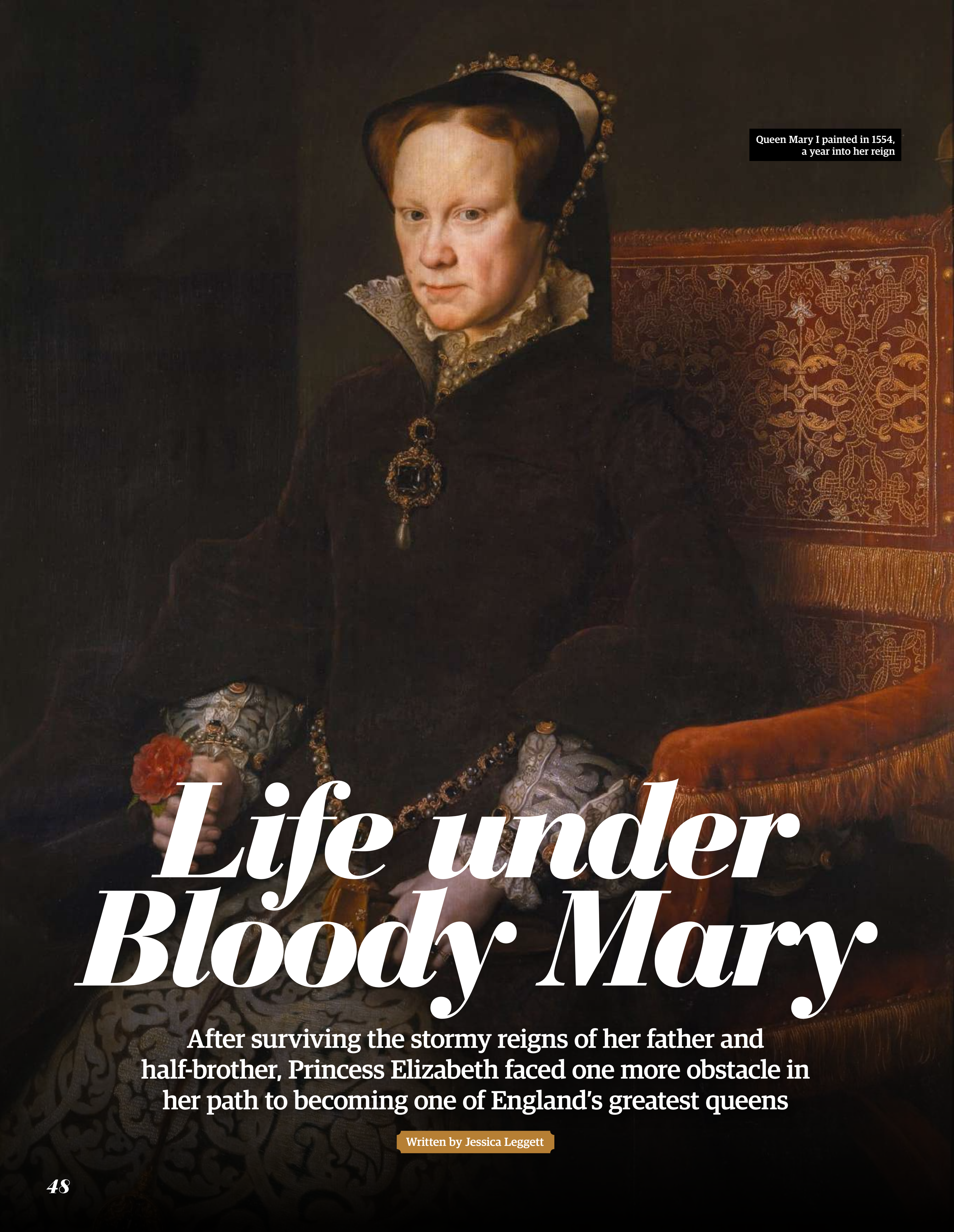
Having been sentenced to be hung, drawn and quartered Wyatt was executed on 11 April, but before he died he exonerated Elizabeth and the hapless Courtenay from any wrongdoing: "Whereas it is said that I should accuse my lady Elizabeth's grace and my lord Courtenay; it is not so, good people. For I assure you neither they nor any other was privy of my rising before I began. As I have declared to the queen's council. And this is most true." After the execution many dipped their handkerchiefs in Wyatt's blood and his head was stolen as a martyr's relic.

Wyatt's last words saved Elizabeth from a fate that would've changed history. Although she was still under great suspicion, the government could find no explicit evidence against her. Elizabeth was removed from the Tower on 19 May and, although she was kept under house arrest, her life was spared. Others were not as lucky. Like Elizabeth, Courtenay was spared, but nearly 100 other rebels were executed as traitors. Most were hung, drawn and quartered.

On balance the rebellion was a complete failure – but it had almost succeeded. If the Londoners had supported Wyatt, Mary could have been deposed and Elizabeth enthroned. The charismatic Wyatt and the xenophobic feelings of the population could have made this possible. As it was, Mary married Philip II of Spain on 25 July, but she died in 1558 without an heir, and it was the Protestant Elizabeth who became queen despite her sister's very best efforts.

Although Wyatt had arguably put her life in danger, his personal intervention ensured that Elizabeth did not suffer the same fate as Lady Jane Grey and consequently the course of English history was changed forever.

© Getty Images, Alamy, Rocio Espin; The Lost Gallery


Queen Mary I painted in 1554, a year into her reign

Life under Bloody Mary

After surviving the stormy reigns of her father and half-brother, Princess Elizabeth faced one more obstacle in her path to becoming one of England's greatest queens

Written by Jessica Leggett

Ever since the execution of her mother, Anne Boleyn, on 19 May 1536, Elizabeth's own precarious life had been at risk. At just two years old, her entire world had been turned upside down as her father grew ever-more desperate in his quest for a son. Yet the princess never faced a more difficult time than during the reign of her half-sister, Queen Mary I, whose determination take England back to Catholicism thrust Elizabeth into the spotlight as a challenger to the throne.

Just as Mary had been a symbol of resistance for Catholics across England during the reign of her brother, King Edward VI, a zealous Protestant, Princess Elizabeth was the symbol for the Protestant resistance during her half-sister's reign. Close during Elizabeth's youth, as the two sisters grew older it was evident that they were as different as night and day.

Aged 37 when she ascended the English throne, Queen Mary was a reserved, pious woman whose face was lined with the torment that she had endured following the separation of her parents and the subsequent declaration that she was an illegitimate daughter. Meanwhile, Elizabeth was almost two decades her junior at 19 years old, young, beautiful and charming, with a nature as captivating as her vivacious mother's. The stark contrast was obvious when it came to Mary's coronation in October 1553, where she gave Elizabeth a prominent place in the procession.

> "The princess found herself embroiled in court gossip and potentially implicated in plots against her half-sister"

One of the first acts that Mary performed as queen was to validate the marriage of her parents, King Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, thereby declaring herself as legitimate once more. It was a necessary move to secure her position as queen but in doing so, she had also distanced herself from Elizabeth, who remained illegitimate.

It was not long before the princess found herself embroiled in court gossip and potentially implicated in plots against her half-sister. To protect herself, Elizabeth asked the queen for her permission to leave the royal court, receiving Mary's blessing. Elizabeth relocated to her private residence at Ashridge, hoping that by avoiding the court she may just survive Mary's reign.

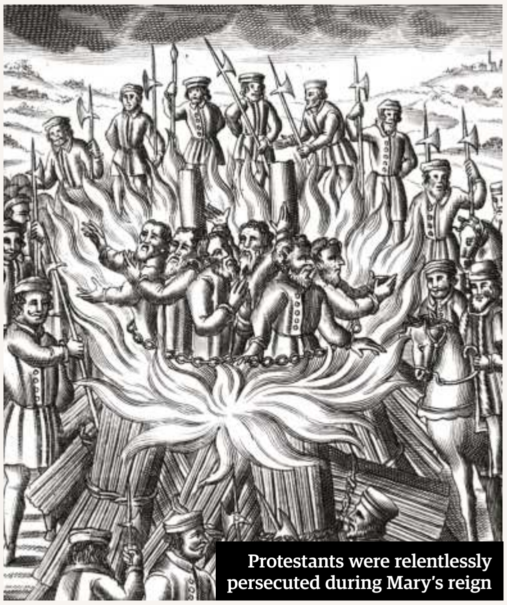
Although Mary's accession was celebrated across the nation, it was not long before popular opinion began to sour. It was well known that the queen, already reaching the end of her childbearing years, was in desperate need of a husband and heir. Despite attempts by her council to persuade her to marry an Englishman, Mary refused. After all, how could she be both a queen and a wife if her husband was one of her subjects?

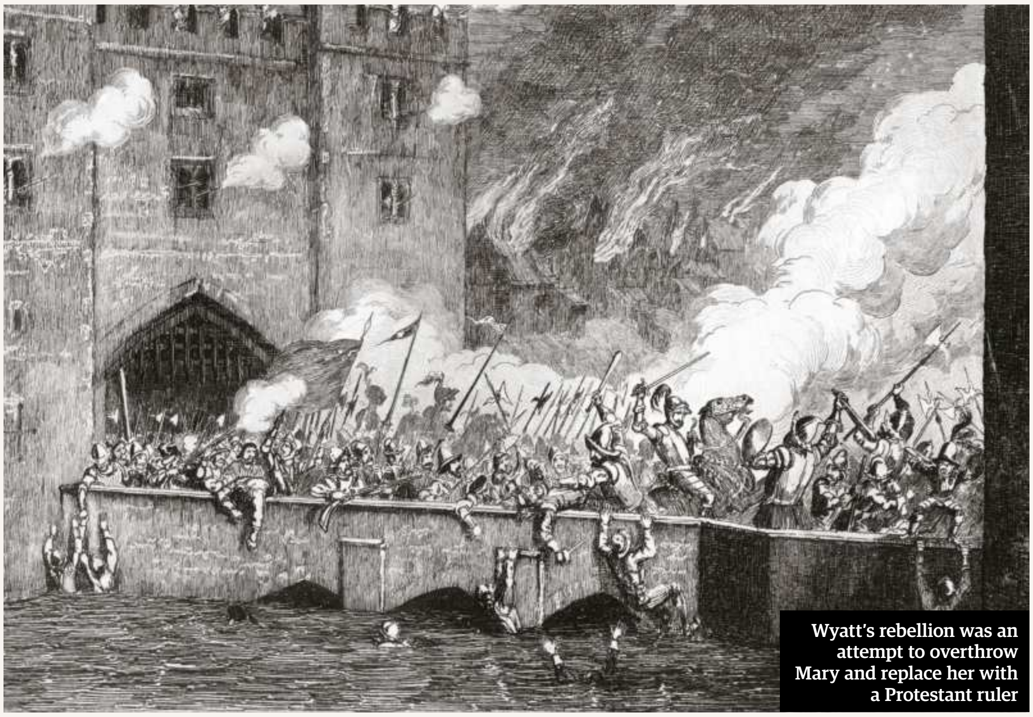
Instead, she looked towards her cousin Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor. They had been engaged before when Mary was just a little girl but it was clear to see that their time had already passed. By this point, Charles was already approaching his mid-50s and still mourning his beloved wife Isabella, who had died some 15 years earlier. The engagement was not meant to be but Charles offered a solution - his son, Prince Philip.

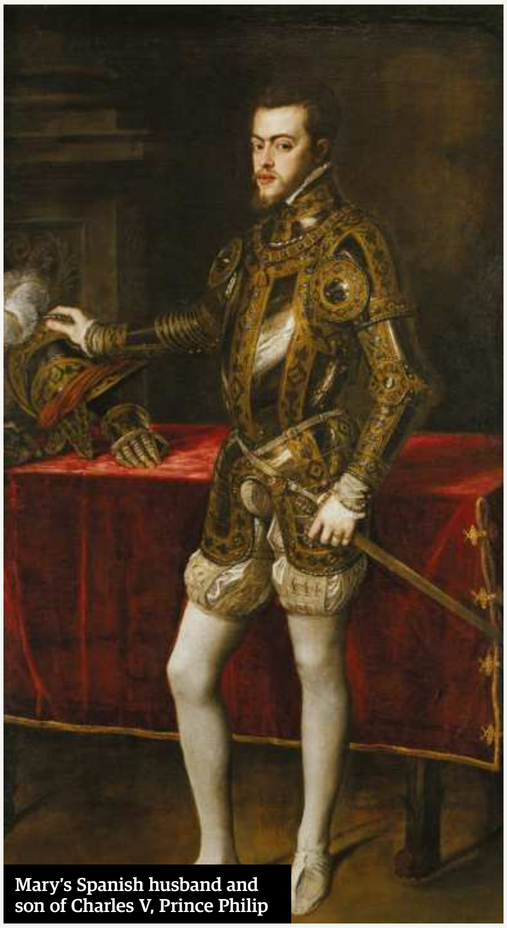
Mary was delighted with the proposal. At eleven years her junior, Prince Philip was a handsome man and as heir to his father's dominions in Spain, he was - almost - her equal, which was what she was looking for. But the choice of a foreign groom, destined to one day become king in his own right, caused uproar in England.

As Mary was the first queen regnant to be crowned in her own right, there was no precedent to determine the role of a male spouse. The idea that a Spanish prince could come and interfere in England, as well as the possibility that England would become beholden to Spain, struck fear into the hearts of Englishmen everywhere. Some members of the aristocracy decided that they couldn't stand by and let England fall into the hands of a Spaniard. Soon, a rebellion was in the works to overthrow the Catholic queen and replace her with either Lady Jane Grey or Princess Elizabeth. In February 1554, 3,000 rebels led by Sir Thomas Wyatt made their way down to London to enact their plot.

Unfortunately for Wyatt, Mary had delivered a rousing speech to the people of London, promising that her marriage to Philip would not change her duty as queen of England. When Wyatt and his rebels knocked on the doors of London, they were firmly rebuffed and later arrested by Mary's men.


Protestants were relentlessly persecuted during Mary's reign


Wyatt's rebellion was an attempt to overthrow Mary and replace her with a Protestant ruler



Mary's Spanish husband and son of Charles V, Prince Philip

While the rebellious plot had been defeated, it had disastrous consequences for both Jane and Elizabeth. Realising that she could never be safe as long as Jane remained a figurehead for dissenting Protestants, Mary had her executed on 12 February 1554. With Jane gone, Elizabeth would inevitably become the new focus of Protestant plots against the queen - a position that immediately placed her in great peril.

The issue of Elizabeth was an impossible situation for Mary. The queen knew that while she lived, her younger half-sister would always be a threat to her. On the other hand, Elizabeth was also a daughter of King Henry VIII and, as stipulated in his will, a legal heir to the English throne. As she had no heir of her own, Mary would need an ironclad reason to justify executing the next in line to the Tudor succession.

Since the rebels had hoped to replace Mary with either Jane or Elizabeth, the princess was implicated in the treasonous plot against her half-sister. Mary had Elizabeth arrested at Ashridge and taken to the Tower of London on 18 March 1554, where she spent the next two months being intensely interrogated in the hope of extracting a damning confession.

But Princess Elizabeth maintained her innocence, proclaiming that she had never acted against her sister. Her answers were clever and evasive and despite undergoing repeat questioning, she did not incriminate herself. Likewise, Wyatt was tortured but he refused to blame Elizabeth, claiming that she knew nothing of the plot. Whether the princess knew anything of Wyatt's rebellion is subject to debate but regardless, there was no hard evidence to condemn her.

Wyatt was executed on 11 April and now Mary faced pressure from her council on both sides. There were some, such as the imperial ambassador Simon Renard, who remained convinced that Elizabeth was a threat to the crown that needed to be removed, practically clamouring to see her blood dripping from the executioner's axe. But on the other hand, the princess also had her own supporters in the council, who fought for her release. Whether it was due to Elizabeth's popularity, the lack of convincing evidence or just remembering the one-time affection she had held for her half-sister, Mary released Elizabeth from the Tower on 19 May - 18 years to the day that Elizabeth's mother had been executed there.

The princess was subsequently moved to Woodstock in Oxfordshire and placed under house arrest in the care of Sir Henry Bedingfield. It was said that Elizabeth lived in fear that she would be assassinated at any moment, but the public welcomed her warmly. For now, she was safely away from the dangerous political intrigues of the English court.

With the threat of Wyatt's rebellion gone, Mary married Philip on 25 July 1554 at Winchester Cathedral. To ease concerns regarding the marriage,

> "Whether the princess knew anything of Wyatt's rebellion is subject to debate"

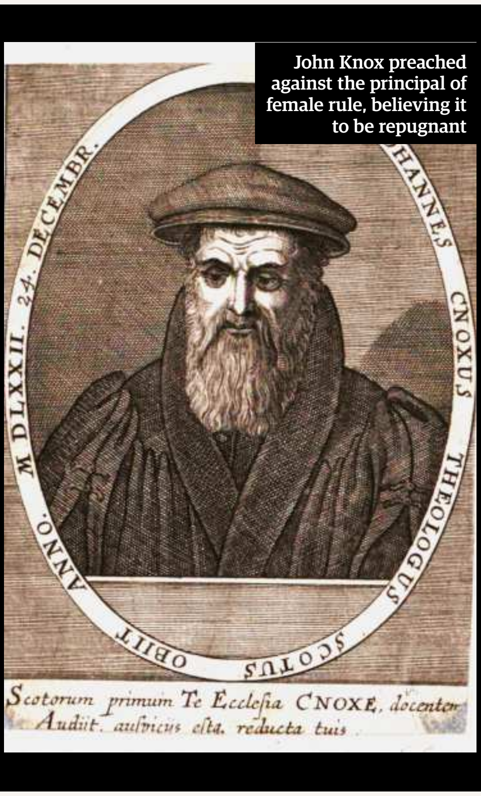
John Knox and the monstrous regiment of women

How one man sought to undermine the female rulers of his time

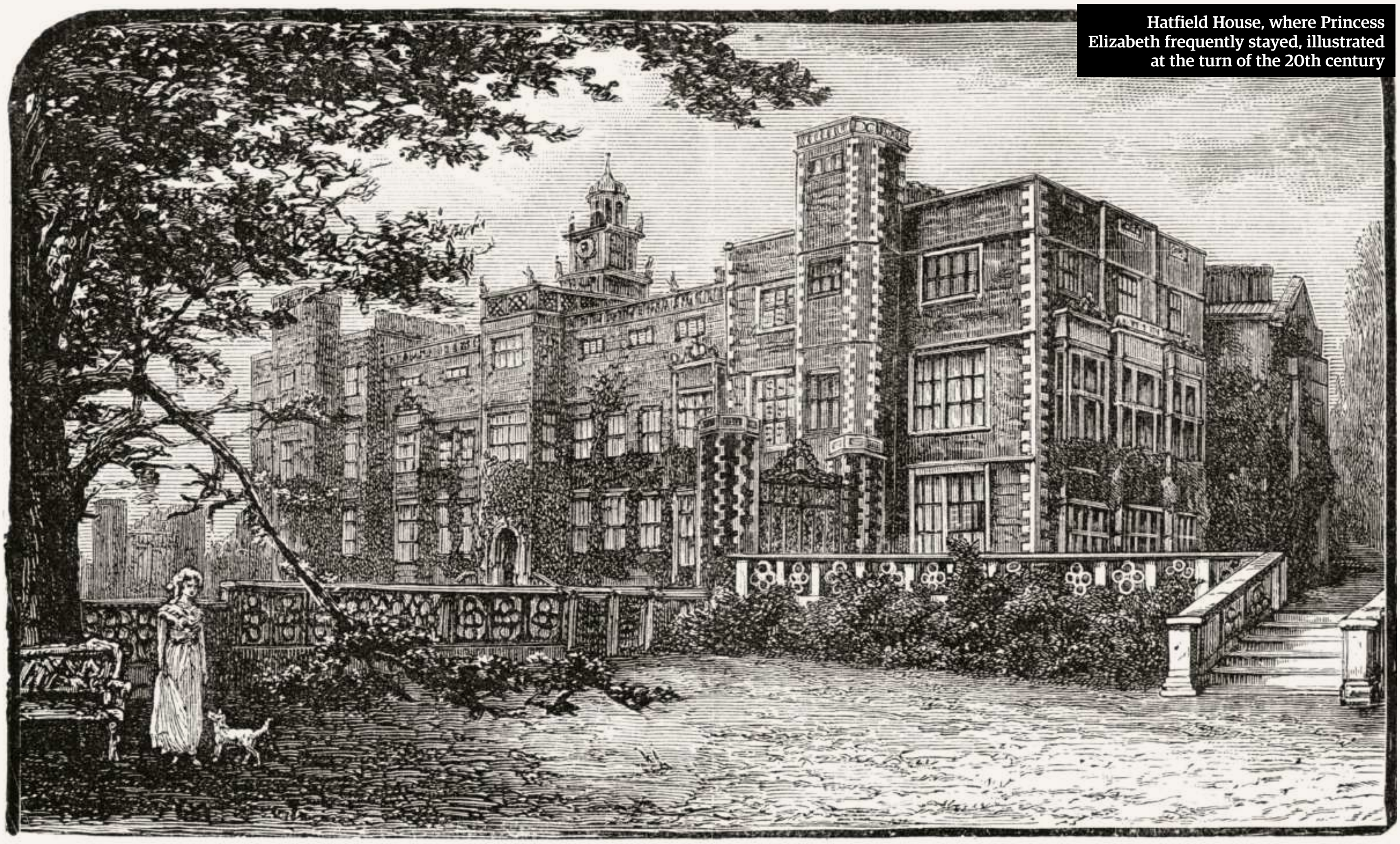
If there is one thing that Mary and Elizabeth most certainly had in common, it was the fact that they were both women destined to become rulers of England. But as queens in their own right, they both faced opposition from the patriarchal society in which they lived - not least from John Knox.

Knox was a Scottish clergyman and leading figure of the Scottish Reformation. Balking against the idea of female rule, Knox created his most famous work, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*. Published in 1558, the final year of Mary's reign, he particularly criticised Catholic queens because of their religion, deeming them unfit to rule - indeed, his condemnation of Mary has affected her historical reputation in the centuries following her death.

But Knox was not just concerned with religion - he was also worried about political power. In his eyes, women wielding power went against God, and he states, "It is more than a monster in nature that a woman should reign and bear empire over a man." Knox's views landed him in hot water during Elizabeth's reign - despite the fact she was Protestant, she was offended by his views against female rule. Elizabeth refused to allow Knox safe passage through England in 1559 and opposed him for the rest of his life.


HANNES CNOXUS THEOLOGUS SCOTUS OBIIT ANNO. M DLXXII. 24. DECEMBR.
Scotorum primum Te Ecclesia CNOXE, docente
Audiit. auspicus esta. reducta tuis

John Knox preached against the principal of female rule, believing it to be repugnant



Hatfield House, where Princess Elizabeth frequently stayed, illustrated at the turn of the 20th century

it was agreed that while he could hold the title of king, Philip would have no authority in England whatsoever, and that the power of the crown rested solely with the queen.

Four months later, in her quest to restore Catholicism in England, the queen revived the heresy acts that had been repealed during the reigns of her father and half-brother, Edward. She removed all aspects of Protestant worship and over the next four years and almost 300 Protestants were burned at the stake, leading to Mary's famous epithet 'Bloody Mary'.

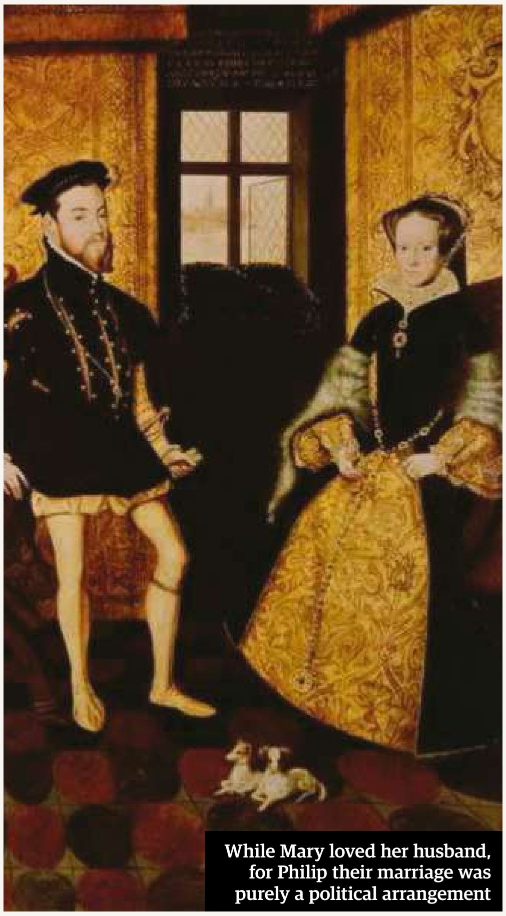
As a Protestant herself, Elizabeth would have likely feared for her life. If her near-death experience earlier in the year had taught her anything, it was that in order to survive she needed to at least appear like she was acquiescing to her sister. Elizabeth outwardly claimed to have conformed to Roman Catholicism, even asking Mary for books so that she could become informed about the faith.

Of course, the idea that her sister was finally accepting Catholicism pleased Mary, but nothing could eclipse her own news - on 28 November 1554, she announced her pregnancy. The queen was ecstatic and in 1555, she relocated to Hampton Court Palace in preparation for the birth. Perhaps at the instigation of Philip, who hoped to make an ally of Elizabeth for his own purposes, Mary recalled her half-sister to court in April to attend on her during the birth.

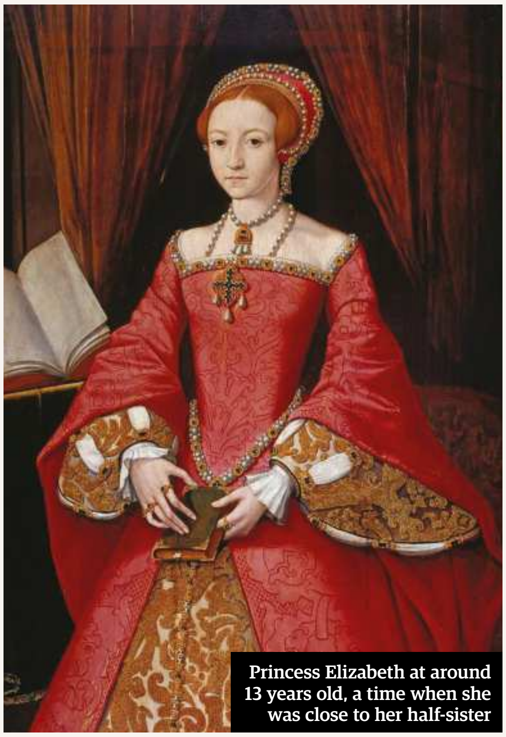
The importance of Mary's baby on Elizabeth's future cannot be overstated. If the child lived, then they would supersede Elizabeth in the line of succession and weaken her chances at gaining the English crown. If the child died, then Elizabeth's accession was almost guaranteed, as by now Mary was 39 years old. England waited with baited breath for the announcement of the new Catholic heir that the queen had dreamed of.

On 30 April, the city of London roared in celebration at the news that the queen had given birth to a healthy baby boy. The drinks were being poured to commemorate the little prince when new information emerged - the story was the result of false rumours and the queen had yet to give

> "Elizabeth outwardly claimed to have conformed to Roman Catholicism, even asking Mary for books"



While Mary loved her husband, for Philip their marriage was purely a political arrangement



Princess Elizabeth at around 13 years old, a time when she was close to her half-sister

birth. Nevertheless, Mary remained resolute that her longed-for child was on its way.

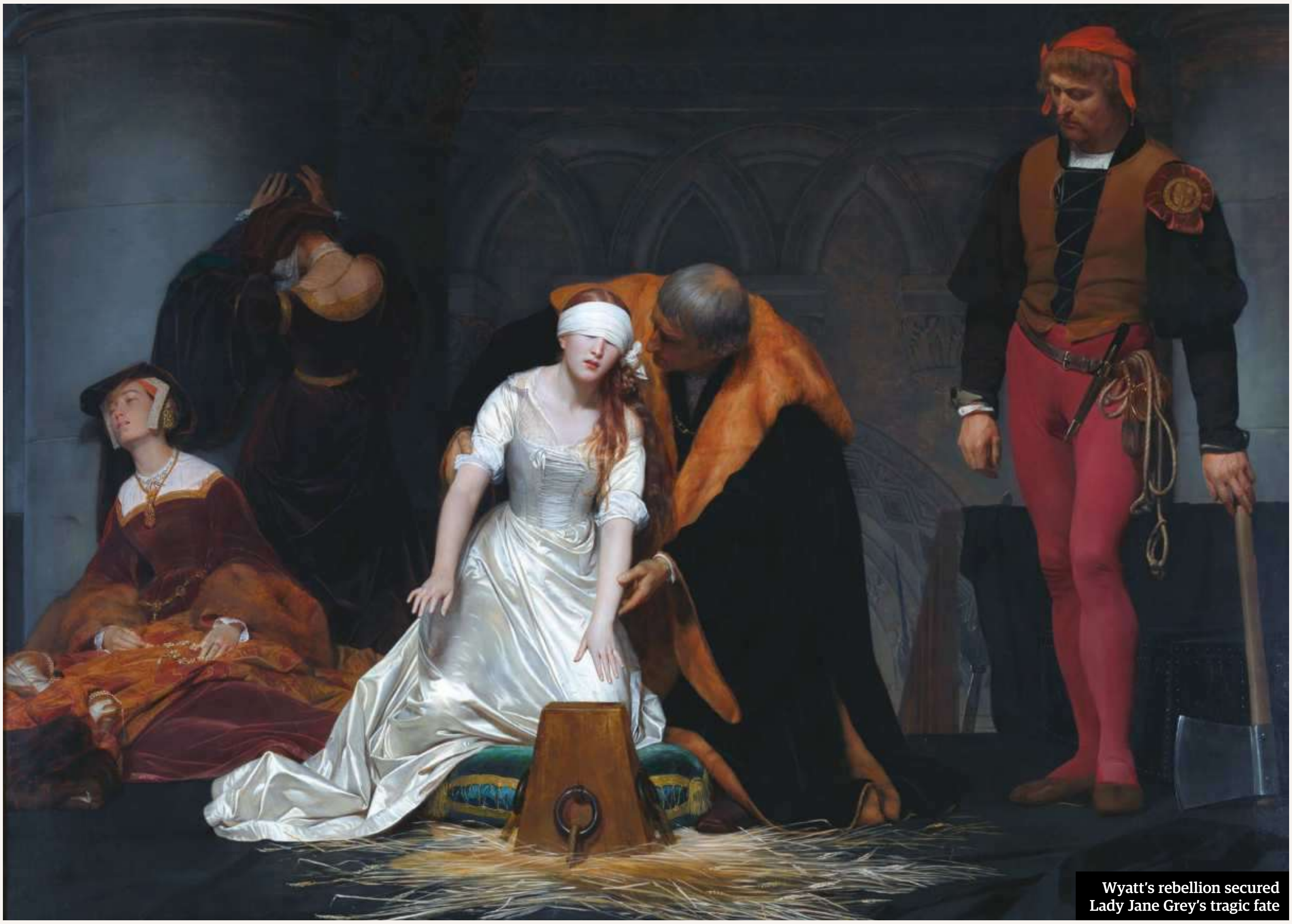
But as May came and went with no royal baby, murmurs started spreading around the court, as well as among the public. Had Queen Mary been pregnant at all? It was obvious to everyone but her until finally, in July, she was forced to sadly admit to herself that she was not going to have a baby. Her symptoms, including her growing belly, indicated that the queen had suffered from a phantom pregnancy. In August, she quietly emerged from her confinement childless and humiliated. Meanwhile Philip, realising that Mary was not going to have a child, left that month to return to his own duties in Spain.

As for Elizabeth, she moved to Hatfield House in October, taking her governess and friend, Kate Ashley, with her. The princess lived there quietly for seven months until May 1556, when Kate was caught with seditious books in her possession. Although it could not be proven that Elizabeth had anything to do with the material, it was enough reason to imprison Kate for three months. Upon her release, she was forbidden from returning to Princess Elizabeth, depriving the latter of her friend and companion.

Around 18 months after he had left England, Philip returned to visit his wife in March 1557. Mary had been sending him frequent letters expressing how much she had missed him while he was away, although Philip's return was more necessitated out of his desire to convince Mary to join Spain's war against France than seeing his wife. The queen's councillors refused to join the war citing, along with many other factors, that England was low on resources after a series of poor harvests.

With his request denied, Philip returned home to Spain four months later. Though Mary would have been heartbroken to watch her husband sail away once again, this time she was not being left completely alone. In January 1558, Mary announced that she was seven months pregnant and this time, she was absolutely sure that she was going to have a baby.

Yet despite her certainty, Mary had suffered another phantom pregnancy. At 42 years old,



Wyatt's rebellion secured Lady Jane Grey's tragic fate

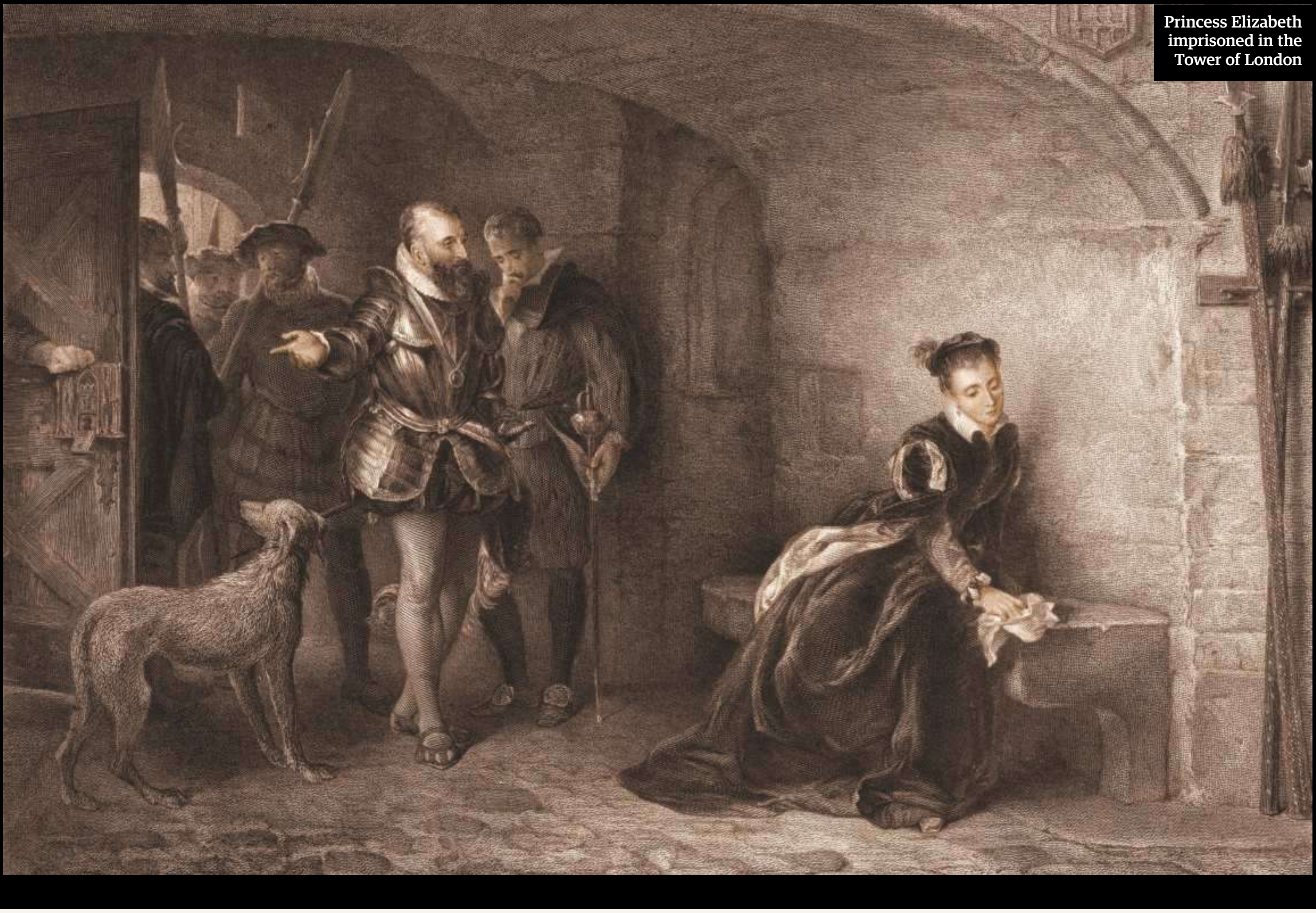
The Tide letter

Elizabeth proved her cunning when faced with imprisonment

In the wake of Wyatt's rebellion, Elizabeth was left in an extremely dangerous situation. Her cousin, Lady Jane Grey, had been executed in the aftermath so that she could no longer be used as a figurehead for religious dissent in Mary's kingdom.

With Jane dead, Elizabeth would inevitably become the new focus of Protestant plots to remove the Catholic queen. Knowing that she could face the executioner's axe at any moment because of this, Elizabeth was desperate to speak to her half-sister. On 17 March 1554, she wrote a letter to Mary begging for an audience. Fearing that her enemies would try to alter the letter, she even drew lines across the blank space above her signature. However, her letter was in vain as the queen chose to ignore it.

Nevertheless, Elizabeth's letter has gone down in history as the 'Tide Letter.' Aware that she was destined for the Tower, she had taken her time in writing to her half-sister. By taking so long, the low-tide of the Thames had changed, preventing boats from safely travelling under London Bridge - and therefore Elizabeth gained one extra day of freedom before she was finally imprisoned.



Princess Elizabeth imprisoned in the Tower of London

she now had to accept the fact that she was never going to produce the Catholic heir that she desperately needed to keep the throne from falling into Protestant hands. To make matters worse, it was clear that the queen's health was declining rapidly and by October 1558, Elizabeth was already starting to arrange her government in secret. Even Philip, aware that his wife's days were numbered, covertly sent the count of Feria to negotiate a marriage with Elizabeth. Philip believed that by marrying Elizabeth, he would be able to keep England in the grips of Catholicism - but the princess swiftly refused the proposal.

Realising that she had to name an heir, Mary finally relented and named Elizabeth as her successor on 6 November 1558, on the fruitless condition that her half-sister kept to Roman Catholicism. The queen died 11 days later on 17 November during a flu epidemic, although it is thought that she may have died from uterine cancer, which may also explain the bloated stomach she experienced during her pregnancies.

Princess Elizabeth was reportedly sitting under an oak tree at Hatfield House when she was told that she was now the queen of England. At 25 years old, she had spent just under 23 years of her life in constant uncertainty, unsure of the future that lay ahead for her. Having witnessed the turbulent and troubled reign of her sister, Elizabeth knew the mistakes that she would have to avoid if she wanted to become a great queen - and one of the most successful rulers to have ever governed England.

The rise

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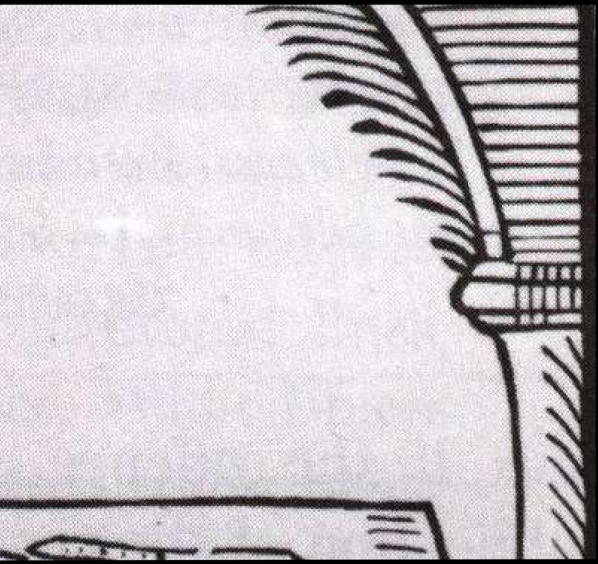

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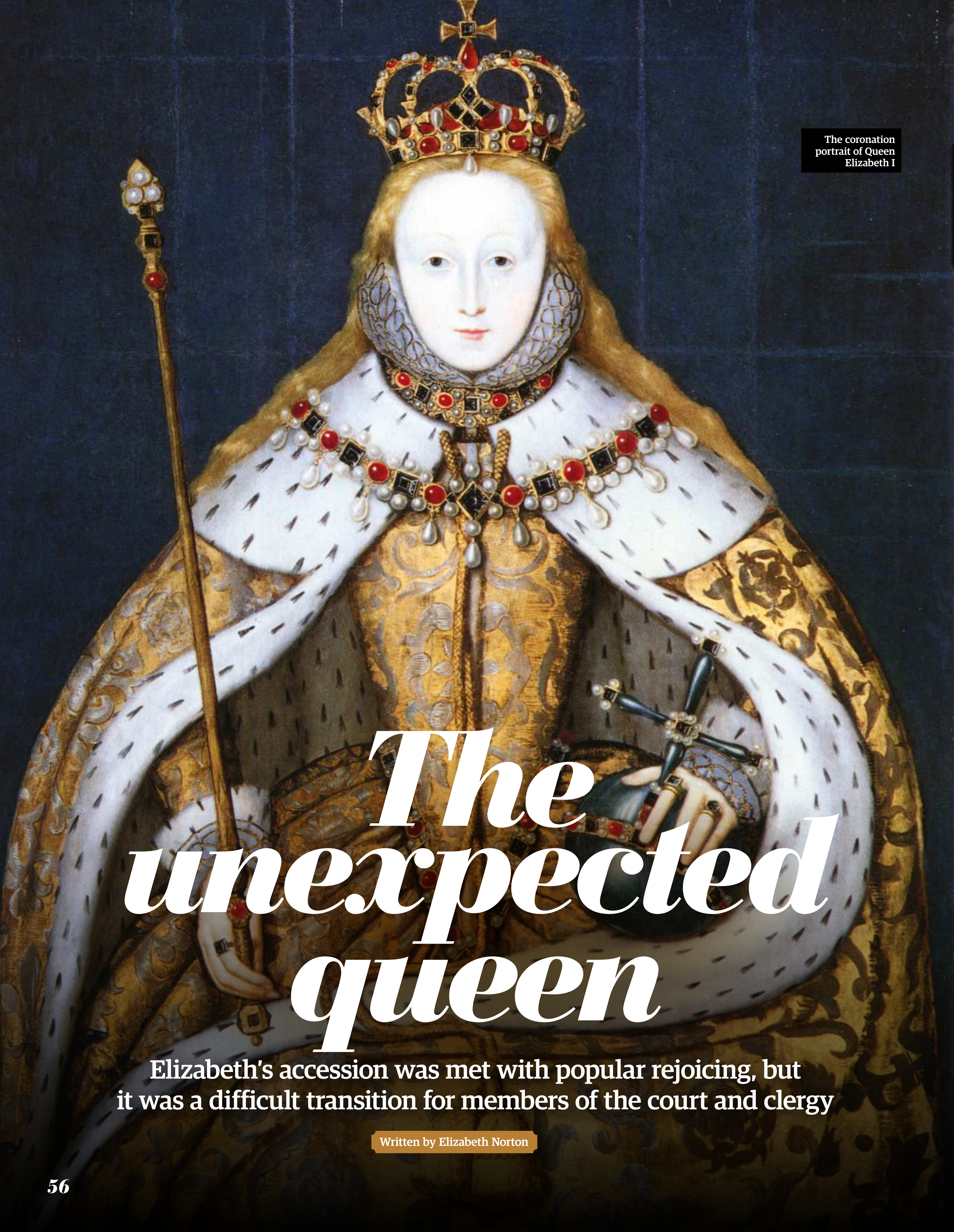


The coronation portrait of Queen Elizabeth I

The unexpected queen

Elizabeth's accession was met with popular rejoicing, but it was a difficult transition for members of the court and clergy

Written by Elizabeth Norton

On the morning of 17 November 1558, Elizabeth made her way into the park at Hatfield Palace. Reading under an oak tree, she was interrupted by members of the royal council, carrying Queen Mary's coronation ring. As she sank to her knees, Elizabeth said, in Latin, "This is the Lord's doing: it is marvellous in our eyes." At the age of 25, she had become queen of England.

Elizabeth cannot have been surprised by the news. For weeks, the road to Hatfield had been busy with courtiers flocking towards the heir to the throne. Earlier that month, the Spanish ambassador, the count of Feria, had arrived in England to find Queen Mary dying. After summoning the council to inform them of King Philip's support for Elizabeth's succession, he resolved to visit her himself. Finding a "very vain and clever woman" who was in no mood to credit Philip with helping her to win the throne, it was clear that she intended to be ruled by no one.

The count of Feria's account of his meeting with Elizabeth gave the first indication of how she intended to rule as queen. He did not think she would be "well-disposed in matters of religion", since she was surrounded by people he considered to be "heretics". Although Elizabeth had dissembled and attended Mass during Mary's reign, she was widely believed to be a Protestant and was expected to once again move the English Church away from Rome. With the establishment of a Protestant religious settlement one of her first acts as queen, Feria was proved to be correct.

Feria also noted that "she had been thoroughly schooled in the manner in which her father conducted his affairs". Thanks to her troubled childhood and early life, Elizabeth had served a long political apprenticeship. She knew many of the major political players at court and appointed her council the day after her accession. Chief among them was William Cecil, a Northamptonshire gentleman who had served at court since the reign of Henry VIII. As a fervent Protestant, Cecil had advised Elizabeth since Edward VI's reign. She trusted his judgment and he served as her chief advisor for the next 40 years.

In the important role of master of the horse, which gave personal access to the monarch, Elizabeth chose her childhood friend, Lord Robert Dudley. He would later write that "I have known her better than any man alive since she was eight years old" and, while controversial as the son and grandson of executed traitors, he was handsome and dashing. As well as making new appointments to the Privy Council, such as the ardent Protestants Sir Nicholas Throckmorton and Sir Francis Knollys, Elizabeth also retained ten of her sister's councillors, giving the new regime some continuity with the old. Her council was smaller and less unwieldy than her predecessor's.

As well as appointments to her council, the new queen set about appointing her household. Such posts were coveted, since they gave personal access to Elizabeth. Kate Ashley, her former lady mistress, received the chief role as first lady of the bedchamber, while her husband became master of the jewel house. Thomas Parry, who had served Elizabeth since childhood, was her comptroller of the household, while a number of Boleyn cousins found prominent roles. These individuals who had known Elizabeth for years and were close to her would be highly influential at court over subsequent decades.

One role that was missing was that of king consort. Elizabeth's sister, Mary, had married soon after her accession and many found the idea of a woman ruling alone to be impossible. Elizabeth would receive a formal petition from parliament asking her to marry less than three months after her accession. Receiving the Commons' deputation kindly, she assured that that she had, since her childhood, "made choice of a single life, which hath best, I assure you, contented me". She meant to "preserve in a virgin's state".

Elizabeth kept to her word, although she was always happy to use the prospect of her marriage as a tool in foreign negotiations. In January 1559, she received a proposal from her brother-in-law, Philip of Spain, who hoped that by marrying Elizabeth he would keep England Catholic. She kept the negotiations open until March 1559, by which time she had concluded a peace with France and had no further need of Spanish aid.

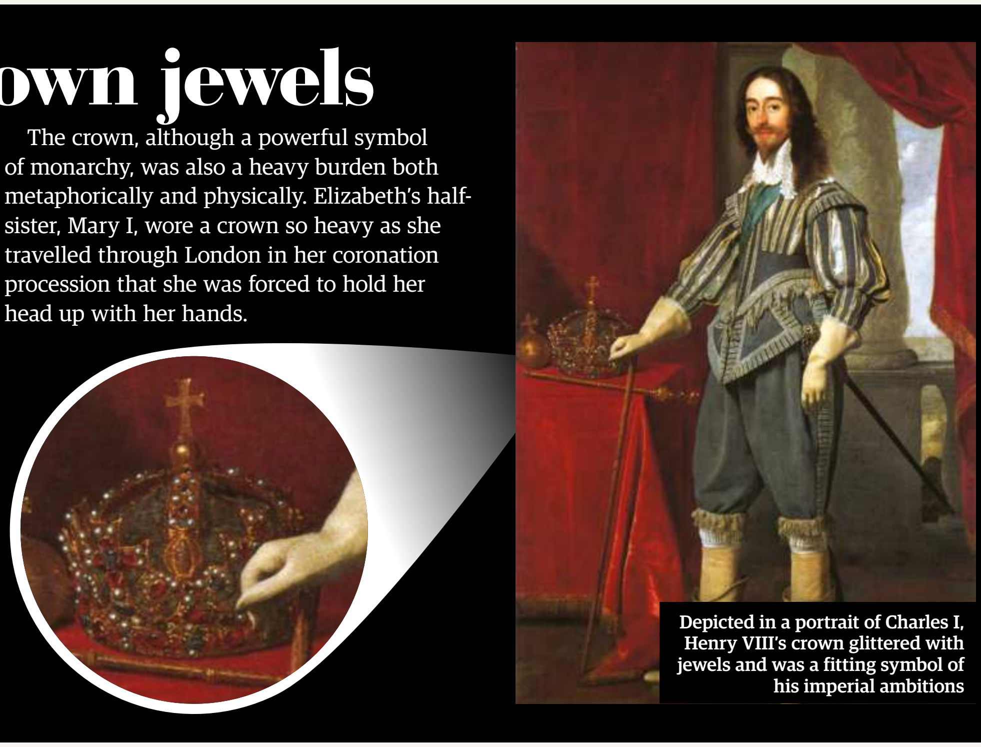
At their meeting, Elizabeth insisted to Feria that "it was the people who put her in her present position" and she was determined to show herself to them. On 23 November the new queen left Hatfield accompanied by over 1,000 people. She

The Tudor crown jewels

The crown jewels used by Elizabeth, her siblings and father were mostly melted down during Oliver Cromwell's Protectorate in the 1650s. Only a late 12th-century golden spoon, used to anoint the monarch with holy oil, survived the destruction. This spoon, which is recorded in royal records since the mid-14th century, was probably used in the coronation of Elizabeth I.

Although so few of the crown jewels used by Elizabeth survive, they can be glimpsed in surviving records and paintings. The crown of Henry VIII can be seen in the background of a portrait of Charles I. This crown, which dates either from Henry VIII's reign or that of his father, was set with 344 sparkling precious stones and was made of 2.3 kilograms of gold. It also included four tiny sculptures of royal saints and one of the Virgin and child. It was used in the coronations of Elizabeth and her siblings.

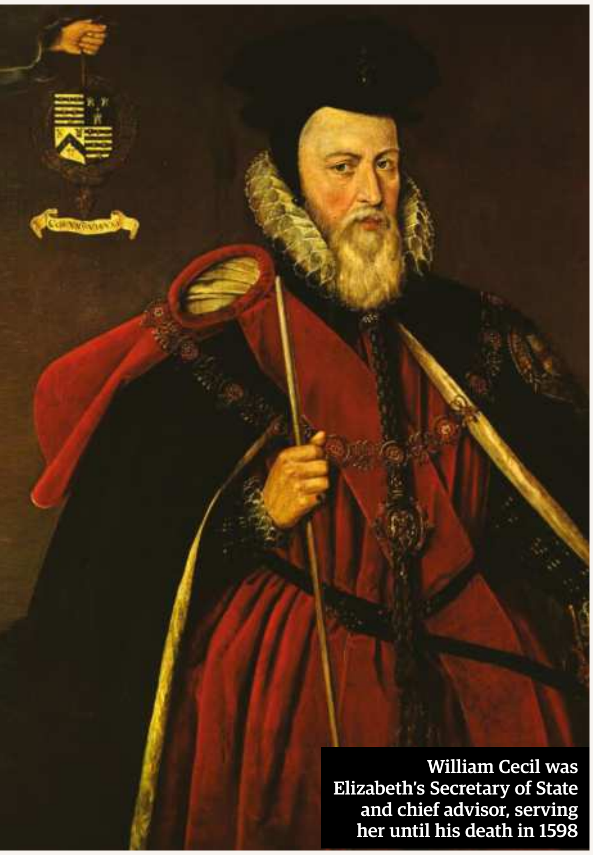
The crown, although a powerful symbol of monarchy, was also a heavy burden both metaphorically and physically. Elizabeth's half-sister, Mary I, wore a crown so heavy as she travelled through London in her coronation procession that she was forced to hold her head up with her hands.



Depicted in a portrait of Charles I, Henry VIII's crown glittered with jewels and was a fitting symbol of his imperial ambitions was met by cheering crowds along the road to London, while the Lord Mayor rode out of the capital to receive her. She was determined to be an approachable figure and, as one contemporary recalled, "If ever any person had either the gift or the style to win the hearts of people, it was this queen." She spoke even to her poorest subjects, smiling and calling out when they praised her.

After spending some nights at the Charterhouse, Elizabeth moved to the Tower on 28 November, again travelling through rejoicing crowds. Calling out again to her subjects, she declared, "Some have fallen from being princes of this land to be prisoners in this place. I am raised from being a prisoner in this place to being a prince of this land." Ascribing her advancement to "God's justice", she entered the fortress that she had last visited under very different circumstances.

Due to widespread suspicion about her religion, Elizabeth struggled to find a bishop who was prepared to crown her. Cardinal Pole, the highly conservative archbishop of Canterbury had died on the same day as Queen Mary, while the archbishop of York was still smarting from his removal from the office of Lord Chancellor. Edmund Bonner, bishop of London, who had presided over Mary's campaign of burnings, had been publicly slighted by the queen when he had approached her on her reception into London and would later be imprisoned. The most senior bishop that Elizabeth could find to officiate was that of Carlisle, who himself did so with misgivings after the queen forbade him from elevating the Host (in accordance with Catholic practice) as he said Mass at court.


William Cecil was Elizabeth's Secretary of State and chief advisor, serving her until his death in 1598

In spite of her difficulties in finding a bishop, Elizabeth was determined that her coronation would be a grand occasion. She consulted the astrologer Dr John Dee on the most auspicious date for her crowning, setting the date for 15 January 1559, which would, she was told, ensure a reign that was long and prosperous.

On 12 January 1559, Elizabeth left Westminster by barge, accompanied by the mayor, aldermen and other dignitaries of the city of London. They processed by water to the Tower of London, where monarchs traditionally slept before their coronations. As well as the royal barge, Elizabeth was accompanied by a procession of boats, decked out with banners and from which musicians played.

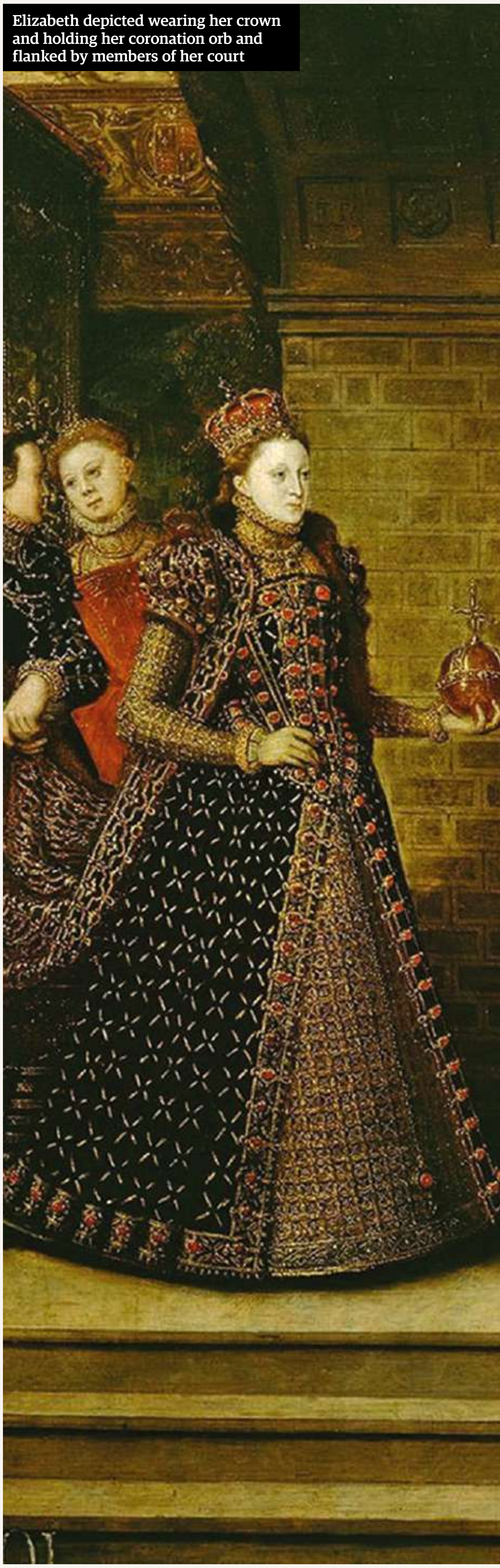
Elizabeth spent the next day in the Tower, where she rewarded some of her closest supporters with peerages, including her cousin, Henry Carey, who became Baron Hunsdon, and her stepmother's brother, William Parr, who was restored as the marquess of Northampton.

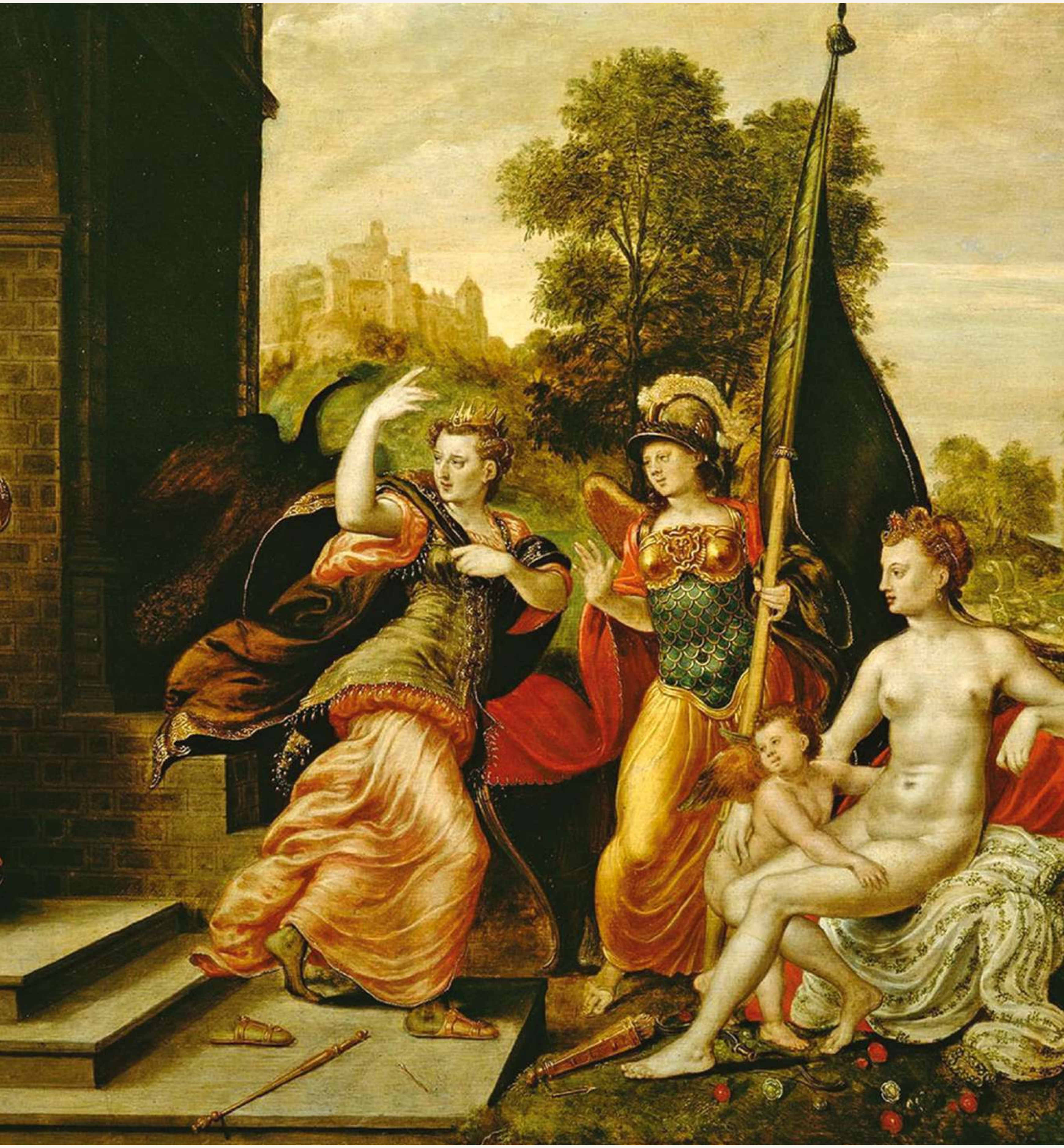
The next day, she left the Tower in the afternoon to ride in procession through the streets of the city towards Westminster. Pageants were staged along the route, while crowds thronged to see the new queen as she passed in her litter. Dressed in cloth of gold and silver, trimmed with ermine and decorated with gold lace, Elizabeth was a sparkling, gorgeous sight. As before, she showed that she had the common touch. She called out her thanks to those that praised her from the crowd. This so "stirred" the people "to love and joy" that they went home singing her praises.

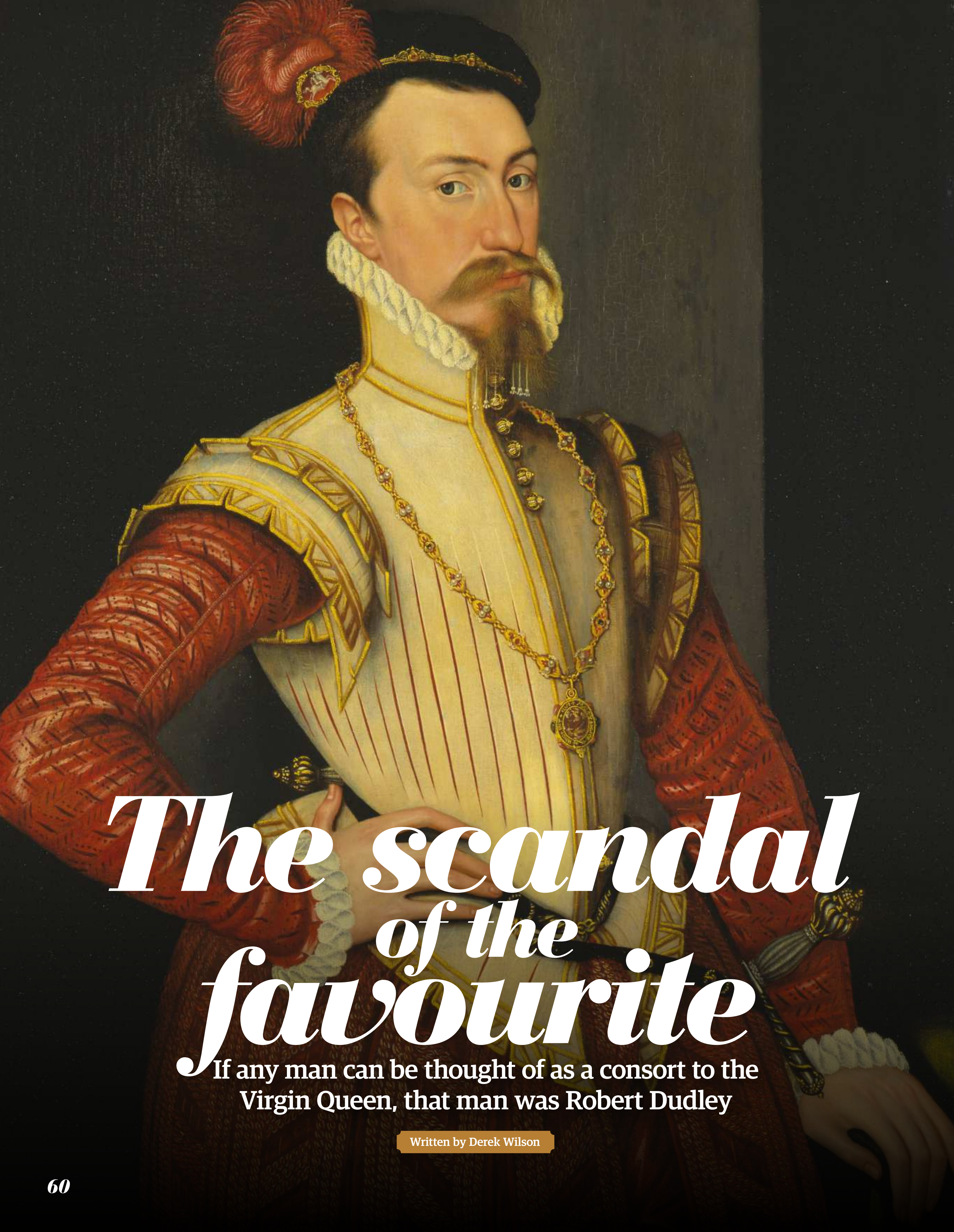
The following day, Elizabeth dressed in her sister's coronation robes, which had been altered to fit her. She stepped out of Westminster Hall and made the short walk to the Abbey on a blue carpet beneath a canopy held above her head. As music played, she entered the Abbey. It was to be the last coronation service to be held in England in accordance with Catholic rite. Elizabeth did, however, retire to her private closet in St Edward's Chapel when the bishop of Carlisle elevated the host during the ceremony, showing clearly to those assembled where her religious sympathies lay.

Immediately after the ceremony, Elizabeth returned to Westminster Hall for her coronation banquet. It was a lavish affair, at which the queen sat alone beneath a canopy of estate. In accordance with tradition, the royal champion rode his horse into the hall to challenge any that disputed her title. Nobody spoke. On 15 January 1559 the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, who was still legally illegitimate, was finally the undisputed queen of England.

Elizabeth depicted wearing her crown and holding her coronation orb and flanked by members of her court







The scandal of the favourite

If any man can be thought of as a consort to the Virgin Queen, that man was Robert Dudley

Written by Derek Wilson

When, on 17 November 1558, news was brought to Elizabeth Tudor that she was now Queen of England, she immediately made a list of important people at home and abroad who needed to be urgently informed. One name on the list was Lord Robert Dudley. For the next 30 years, the queen and the man on whom she conferred the title Earl of Leicester were seldom separated. When Dudley was absent from court he wrote Elizabeth letters – messages she treasured. After her own death in 1603, a casket beside her bed was discovered to hold what was described in her own handwriting as 'his last letter'. Theirs was a tempestuous relationship, often the subject of rumour and gossip. There was talk of clandestine marriage plans, a secret love child, even complicity to murder. Anger and resentment flared up between them, as those emotions often can between lovers. Yet the relationship, which puzzled many contemporaries, remained close. Writing about it in 1615, the chronicler, William Camden, observed:

"The queen's unlikely confidant was the son and grandson of men who had been executed as traitors"

"Whether it proceeded from any virtue of his, whereof he gave some shadowed tokens, or from their common condition of imprisonment under Queen Mary, or from his nativity, and the hidden consent of the stars at the hour of their birth, and thereby a most straight conjunction of their minds, a man cannot easily say."

The queen's unlikely confidant was the son and grandson of men who had been executed as traitors. Edmund Dudley, a councillor to Henry VII, was beheaded in 1510 because his son Henry VIII needed a scapegoat to carry the blame for his father's unpopular policies. John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, paid the price for trying to keep Mary Tudor off the throne. During Mary's reign, Robert and his brothers spent several months in the Tower of London, not knowing if they would share their father's fate. As things turned out, this incarceration formed a bond between Robert and the princess, as Elizabeth also had to endure a spell there. As the next in line to the throne, she was a potential focus of plots against the queen. Like the Dudleys, she lived under the shadow of the axe.

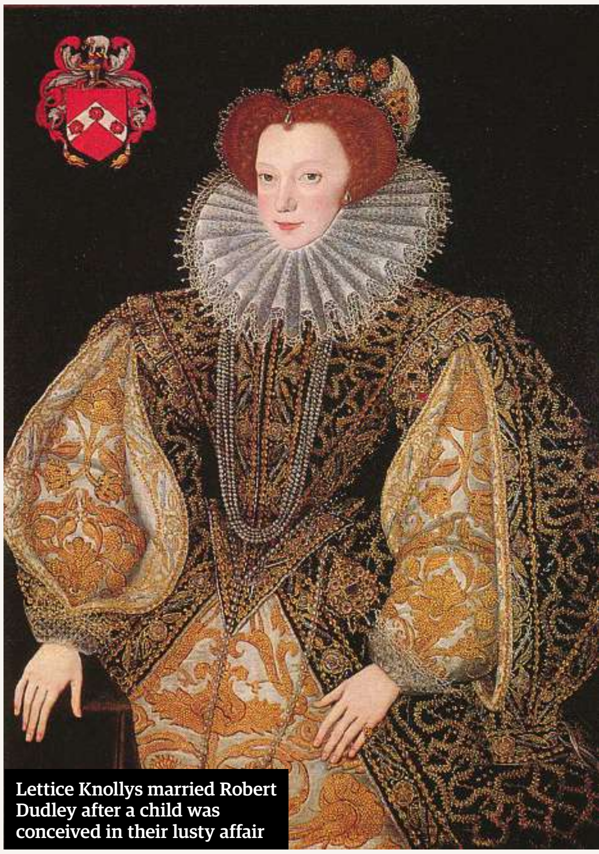
Robert was eventually released and served in the army sent into the Netherlands by Mary's husband, Philip II of Spain. Thus, he enjoyed a measure of royal favour, and was in a position to send discreet messages, and perhaps even some financial gifts, to Elizabeth. What the princess probably appreciated more than the tangible demonstrations of Robert's devotion was his circumspection. She felt herself to be constantly at risk from the attention of hot-headed supporters whose pledges of loyalty could have involved her in sedition. Robert, it seems, knew how to offer friendship and encouragement without overstepping the bounds. For this Elizabeth was very grateful. When the time came for her to take up her role as head of state, Robert Dudley was among those she knew she could trust.

But there were other reasons why she was attracted to him. He was a very handsome young man. His dark good looks earned him the nickname of the 'Gypsy'. He was athletic, an excellent horseman, an accomplished dancer and generally fun to be with. He was also married, which meant that the queen could enjoy Lord Robert's company without ceding any of her power to him. She could have her cake and eat it. Noble families close to the throne were always eager to link their dynasty with the Tudors. Dudley could not indulge such ambition. He had been married for eight years to Amy Robsart, a girl of good Norfolk family. Elizabeth made Robert her Master of the Horse, an appointment that involved virtual daily attendance at court, accompanying the queen when she went hunting or took exercise, and arranging transport when she and her attendants went on progress.

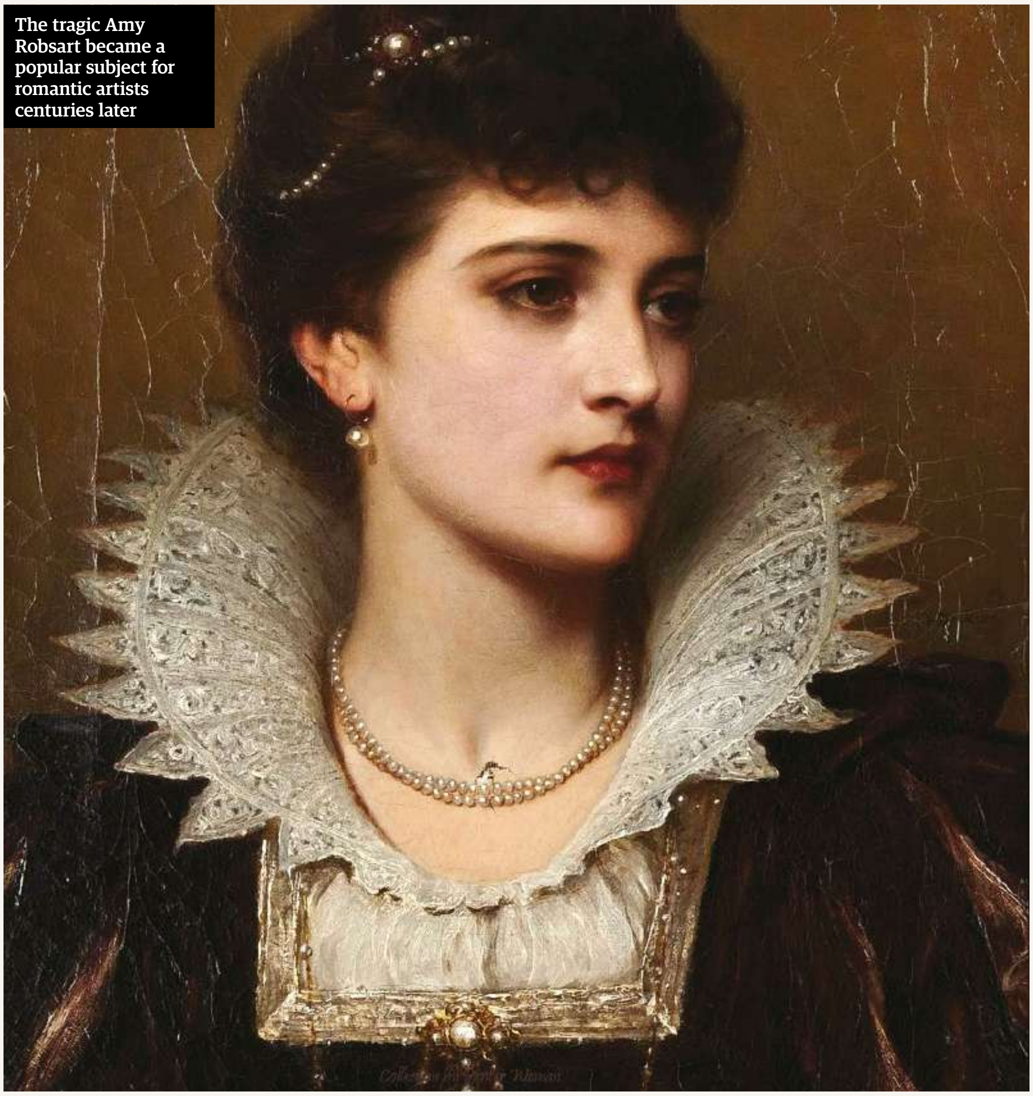
But was there, in fact, nothing more to the relationship than that? Tongues were soon wagging and rumours were zipping along the diplomatic wires. To disentangle truth from gossip and human emotions from state policy is nigh-on impossible after four and a half centuries. The best that we can do is list the most relevant facts. The first, and in many ways the most important, is that everyone expected Elizabeth to marry. It was part of her responsibility to perpetuate the dynasty and maintain the security of the state. But royal wedlock was fraught with difficulty. Marrying a foreign prince carried the implication of becoming involved in the war-like rivalries of Europe's ruling royal houses. Mary Tudor's marriage to Philip of Spain had alienated many of her subjects and provoked a rebellion. Marriage within the realm could only exacerbate the friction between England's leading noble houses. Moreover, Dudley's friendship with the queen made him unpopular. Much of this ill will stemmed from jealousy. Some of this was a hangover from the reputations of Robert's forebears. Those close to the queen and concerned for her reputation were scandalised at the degree of intimacy she permitted her horse-master.

This brings us to the character and behaviour of the two people at the centre of the story. Dudley was disliked because of his deviousness and going behind people's backs to influence the queen against them, but we may well wonder whether anyone in the claustrophobic hothouse atmosphere of the court could claim complete honesty and openness in their relations with the queen and with each other. Dudley was totally dependent on the queen. She could make him or break him at any time. It would be surprising indeed if he did not respond in kind to those who sought to undermine his privileged position.

In contrast to Dudley's opponents at court (chief among whom were the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Sussex and Sir William Cecil), there were many supporters and hangers-on who hitched their wagons to his star. This was simply the way the patronage system worked. Ambitious men attached themselves to courtiers who were in favour, and those courtiers built up a following of people who could be useful to them. Clientage was the bellows that kept the fire burning under the



Lettice Knollys married Robert Dudley after a child was conceived in their lusty affair



The tragic Amy Robsart became a popular subject for romantic artists centuries later

> "Amid all the gossiping and manoeuvring for power, how did the new queen conduct herself towards her 'Sweet Robin'?"

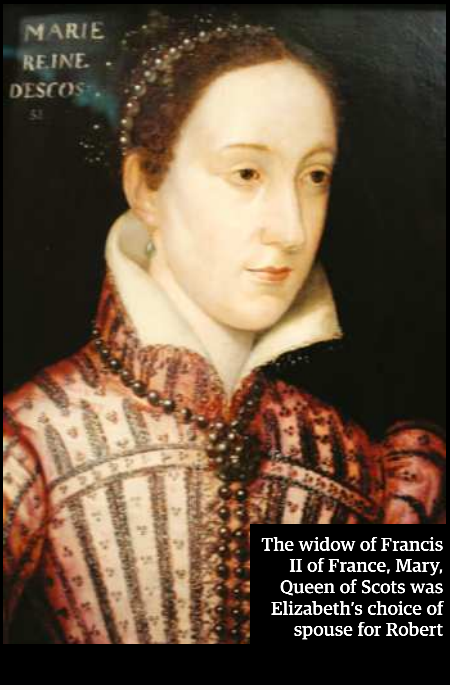
competition between the leaders of the realm. For example, Dudley used his influence to have Amy's stepbrother, John Appleyard, appointed Sheriff of Norfolk in 1559, thereby annoying the Duke of Norfolk, who had backed another candidate.

Amid all the gossiping and manoeuvring for power, how did the new queen conduct herself towards her 'Sweet Robin'? First and foremost she was her father's daughter. She demanded total, unalloyed loyalty from her subjects, especially those of her own entourage. But she was a woman, and that meant that her courtiers could not sustain the relatively simple relationship they would have enjoyed with a male monarch. Flattery was de rigeur, but it took on an element of flirtation - and it did not only travel in one direction. Elizabeth was also good at amorous teasing of the man she nicknamed her 'eyes' (in her letters she often used the symbol ōō). She was possessive and exerted an exclusive claim over Robert as both queen and

Robert IV of Scotland?

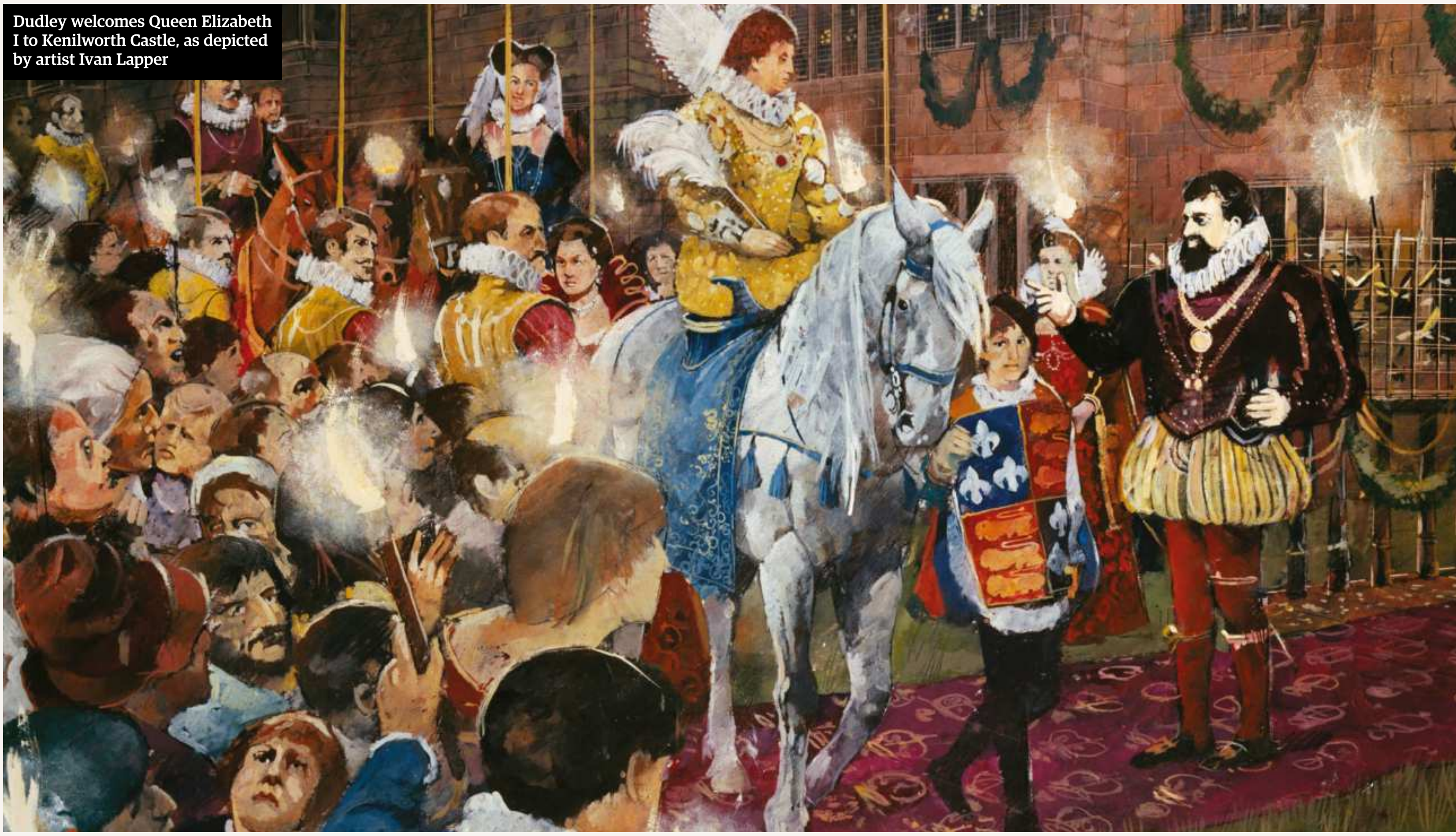
Elizabeth offered Dudley a crown - but not the crown of England

In 1563, Elizabeth devised a plan that to her seemed a brilliant way of solving several problems at once. To everyone else it appeared bizarre. At the end of 1560, the young Francis II of France died. This left his wife, Mary, Queen of Scots, a widow. Any foreign prince she married would share not only control of her kingdom, but also her claim to the English crown. This was a threat - but also an opportunity. If an appropriate husband could be found for Mary, it would cement good relations between the two nations. Then there was the clamouring of parliament for Elizabeth to marry. Could she find some means of settling the succession while avoiding wedlock? The answer seemed obvious: Robert would marry Mary. He would then continue to uphold English interests in the northern court. Most royal advisers saw this for the fantasy it was, but Cecil was in favour of any plan that would remove Dudley from the queen's inner circle. The two people most opposed to Elizabeth's match-making were Mary and Robert. The Queen of Scots was outraged at being fobbed off with Elizabeth's discarded lover. As for Robert, he had no desire to spend the rest of his life in Edinburgh. In order to scotch Elizabeth's scheme, he energetically promoted the bid of Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, who was descended from both the English and Scottish royal houses. It was Darnley whom Mary eventually married - a union that ultimately turned out badly.



The widow of Francis II of France, Mary, Queen of Scots was Elizabeth's choice of spouse for Robert

The monument to Dudley and his second wife at the Beauchamp Chapel of St Mary's Church in Warwick



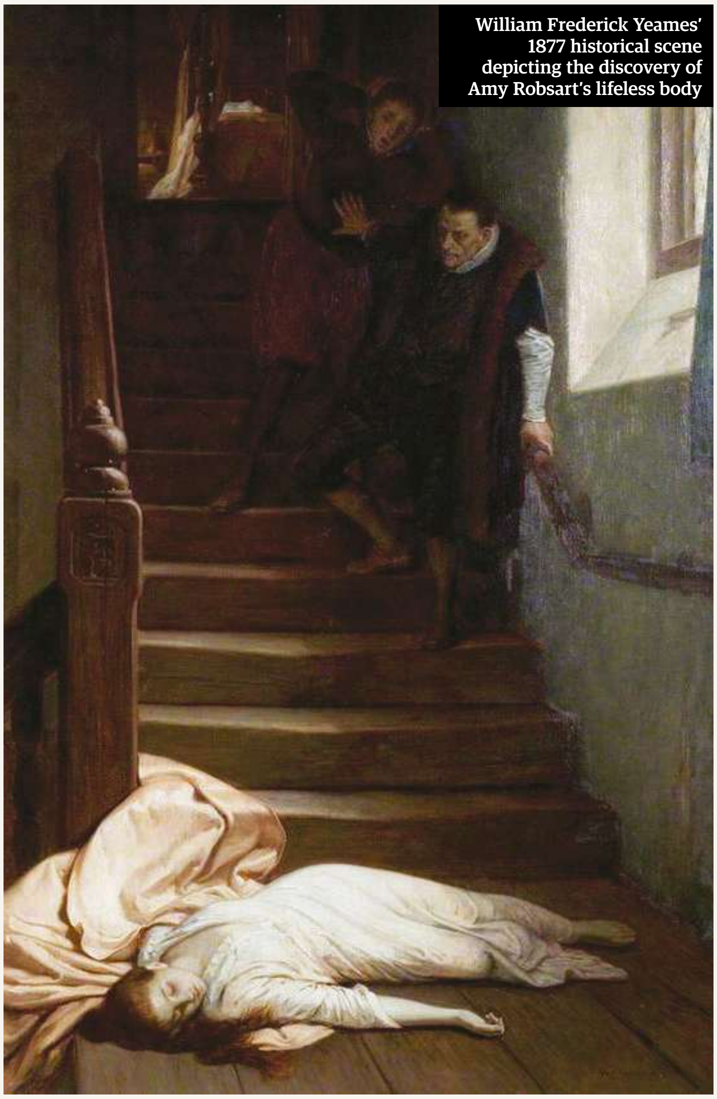
Dudley welcomes Queen Elizabeth I to Kenilworth Castle, as depicted by artist Ivan Lapper

lover. There was no question of sharing him with his wife. Apart from a brief stay in 1559, Amy was not allowed to live with Robert in the environs of the court. She resided, semi-reclusively, in a succession of country homes where her husband could only visit when let off the royal leash. Amy had to be content with the messages and presents Robert sent while Elizabeth enjoyed his exclusive attention day-by-day. Inevitably, malicious rumours and conspiracy theories spread. Robert had to endure the stories that he was only waiting for his wife to die, and even that he was poisoning her in order to marry the queen. Did he contemplate becoming the royal consort? Without a shadow of doubt. But that was not the same as creating the circumstances that would make marriage technically possible.

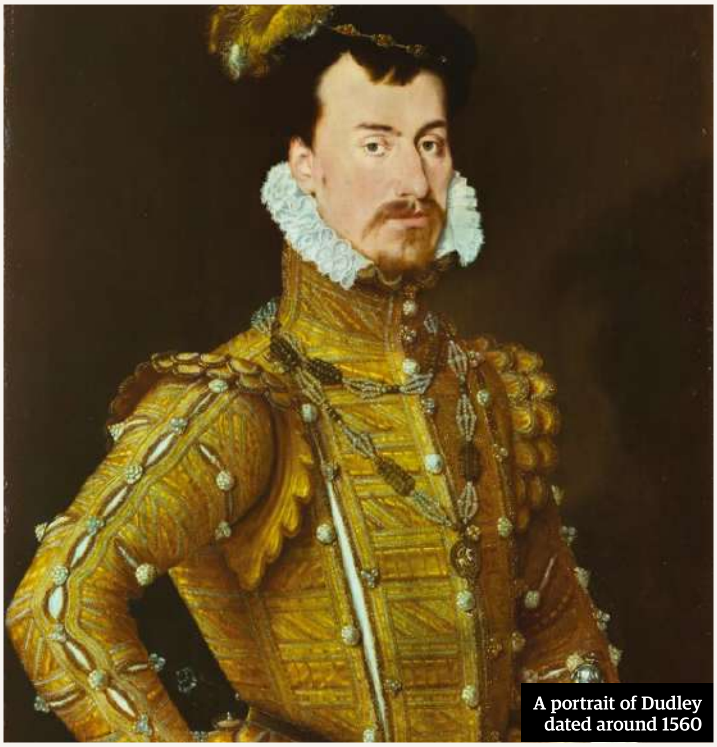
On 8 September 1560, tragedy struck. Amy was lodged at Cumnor Place, near Oxford, at the time leased by Dudley's friend, Anthony Forster. That day the house was virtually deserted, the servants and other residents having gone to Abingdon fair. On their return they found Lady Dudley lying at the foot of a short staircase with her neck broken. Accident? Natural causes? Suicide? Murder? Any scenario could be demonstrated from the inadequate evidence. Dudley ordered an immediate and thorough investigation by the coroner. The conclusion of the inquest was that no sinister activity could be detected, and that Amy had come to her end by mischance.

That, of course, did not silence wagging tongues or put an end to speculation. Dudley's friend, Sir Thomas Blount, sent to Cumnor to make a private report, commented that of late Amy had "had a strange mind in her." Hers had been a wretched existence, pushed out of her husband's life by the royal dominatrix. According to one rumour, she was sick in body as well as mind, with symptoms that might suggest breast cancer. In her desperation, did she convince herself that she would be better off dead? It was Amy herself who had fiercely insisted that everyone was to go to the fair. Whatever she had in mind for that day, she apparently wanted no witnesses. Wittingly or not, she was the author of the suspicious circumstances in which her body was found.

Any murder theory has to answer the question, 'Qui bono?', who benefits? There were many who wanted to blacken Dudley's name and, hopefully, drive a wedge between him and the queen. The one person who could gain nothing from Amy's death in suspicious circumstances was Dudley himself. The tragedy put an end to the triangular relationship that had so suited the queen. She was devastated, and at a loss to know how to deal with the situation. Her first reaction was to send Dudley away from the court. But as soon as the verdict of



William Frederick Yeames' 1877 historical scene depicting the discovery of Amy Robsart's lifeless body



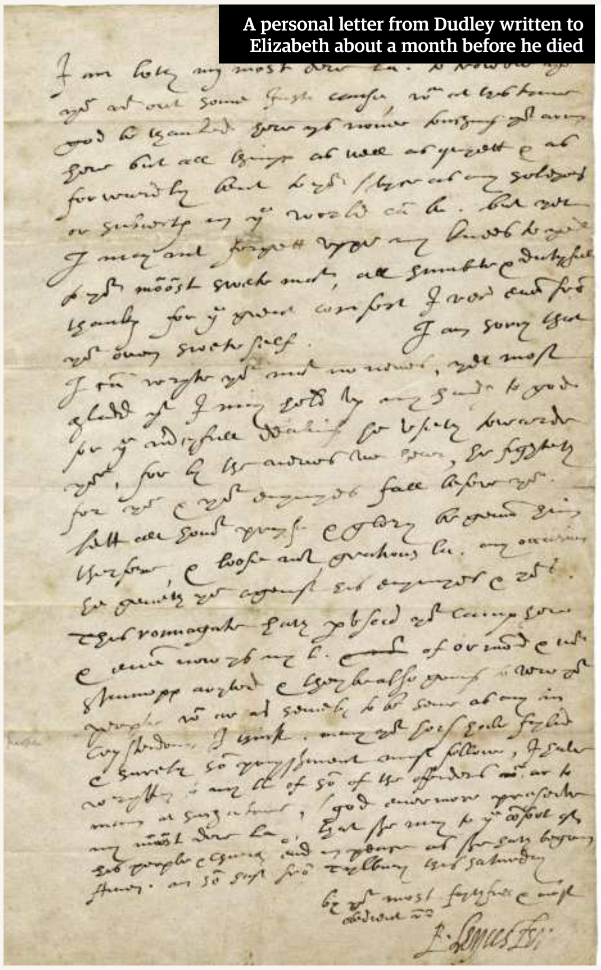
A portrait of Dudley dated around 1560

the inquest was announced she summoned him back to her side. Thereafter, she defended him staunchly, and tongue-lashed anyone who so much as questioned Dudley's relationship with his wife.

To drive home her undiminished trust, Elizabeth announced to a shocked political world that she was going to raise her favourite to the peerage. That really did set the cat among the pigeons. Several councillors were bold enough to advise against the move and finally, in a fit of anger and frustration, she grabbed a knife and slashed to pieces the investiture patent. But she did show her continued support for her ōō by lavishing upon him yet more grants of land. As the mysterious death at Cumnor passed into history, the royal court resumed 'business as usual'. Two years later, when Elizabeth herself was at death's door with a bout of smallpox, she messaged her councillors that in the event of her not recovering, they were to appoint Dudley as Protector of the Realm, with a salary of £20,000.

The queen's brush with death reinforced the anxiety of parliament and the Council. The queen was frequently pressed to marry. Over and again she countered with half-promises and flattering assurances that she had the well-being of her subjects at heart. Dudley was as much in the dark about her real intentions as everyone else. He was now appointed to the Council and, in 1564, Elizabeth bestowed on him the title of Earl of Leicester that she had previously declined to grant. With seats on the executive and in the legislature, Dudley now had the political clout he had hitherto lacked.

"Elizabeth was by now set upon remaining a virgin queen"


A personal letter from Dudley written to Elizabeth about a month before he died

R Leycester

But if the queen intended that he should be her mouthpiece in all matters of policy, she was disappointed. He had convictions of his own, and they were not always in line with those of his royal mistress. As well as the succession issue, there were two subjects dominating political debate – the religious settlement and the growing power of Spain. They could not be wholly separated because the pope was determined to bring England back within the Catholic fold, and Philip II had wrapped himself in the mantle of champion of the 'true faith' determined by any means to achieve the re-conversion of Elizabeth's realm. 'Any means' included fomenting rebellion, plotting the queen's assassination and military intervention. There was a consistency about Leicester's politics. At home he supported that party in the church that favoured further reform (the Puritans) and abroad he took an increasingly interventionist stance, believing England should go to the aid of continental Protestants threatened by Philip's Catholic crusade. In all this he was at odds with the queen, who disliked the Puritans and abhorred the thought of war.

Leicester shared the majority opinion of her advisers that Elizabeth should become a wife and a mother. However, if she did marry then this would inevitably affect his position and the political influence he had gained. The best answer, from his point of view, was for Elizabeth to marry him. Opposition to this gradually waned. Most of the queen's wearied councillors were prepared to accept even this in order to solve the succession crisis. Robert made repeated and determined efforts to bring her to a decision. The climax of his wooing came in 1575 with a lavish and spectacular three weeks of entertainment at his castle in Kenilworth. During this party to end all parties, Elizabeth was regaled with masques, water pageants, poetry recitals, songs and speeches, performed by a variety of characters drawn from classical mythology, but all having one theme – the blessed state of matrimony. But this costly extravagance failed in its objective: Elizabeth was by now set upon remaining a virgin queen. She was by nature cautious. She could see all the disadvantages of marriage – loss of independence, political complications, a shift in the balance of parties at court – and to her mind, they outweighed the enticing pleasures hinted at by Dudley's players.

Leicester had reasons other than personal ambition for wanting to force the issue. The golden chains binding him to the queen were biting into his flesh. Elizabeth still refused to share him with another woman. Marriage was as out of the question for him as it was for her. This meant, as well as sexual frustration, childlessness. The noble Dudley line was doomed to end with him. He had secret affairs, one of which, with Lady Douglas Howard, resulted in an illegitimate son. In 1578, when another of Leicester's amours, Lettice Knollys, Countess of Essex, became pregnant, she insisted on marriage. The queen was furious. She refused to welcome Lettice to court, and ensured that Robert was seldom away from it. It was the Amy Robsart story all over again.

Meanwhile, the nation was heading inexorably towards crisis. In 1570, Pope Pius V had excommunicated the 'heretic' Queen of England, and absolved all her Catholic subjects of their allegiance to her. At the same time, priests trained at a seminary in Douai, Flanders were being sent secretly into England to stiffen the resistance of 'recusants' (Catholics who refused to attend Church of England worship). There were plots to remove Elizabeth from the throne and install Mary, Queen of Scots. In 1572, Dudley's old rival, the Duke of Norfolk, was executed for his involvement in one of them.

On the continent, politico-religious war raged. Philip II was attempting the ruthless suppression of Protestants in the Netherlands. In France, 1572 saw the horrendous St Bartholomew's Day Massacre when between 5,000 and 10,000 Calvinists were butchered. It became clear to most of Elizabeth's advisers that England could not remain aloof from the conflict. The security of queen and country demanded military intervention. The one important person who could not or would not see this was Elizabeth, who resisted all of Dudley's entreaties. In 1584, he was instrumental in forming the Bond of Association, a league of loyal Englishmen pledged to a single course of action: in the event of the queen's assassination they would exact revenge not only on the perpetrators, but on any foreign ruler who hoped to benefit from it.

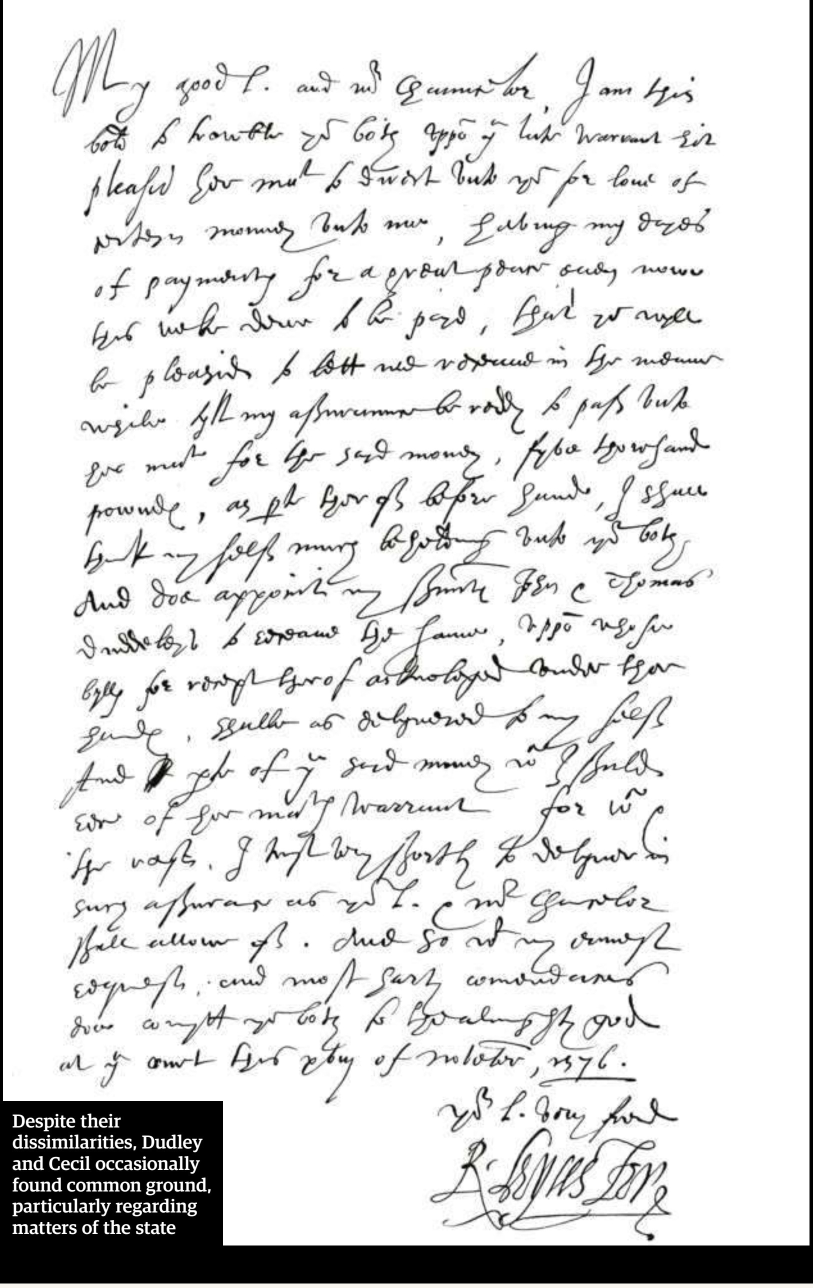
A political ménage á trois

Sometimes enemies and sometimes colleagues, Dudley and Cecil preserved the balance of power at the centre of Elizabethan politics

The two members of Elizabeth's Council who exercised the greatest influence were William Cecil, the 'solid' bureaucrat who had learned his craft in the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI, and Robert Dudley, the flamboyant exotic. Unsurprisingly, they did not make natural bedfellows.

Cecil was appalled at Dudley's emotional hold over the queen, and worked determinedly to prevent Elizabeth from marrying her favourite. He believed that Dudley's influence was the root of the succession crisis, and at one point he even threatened to resign if his royal mistress did not abandon her 'infatuation'. The tidy-minded Cecil always calculated what he conceived to be in the nation's interest, and then worked, by persuasion and intrigue, to bring the queen round to his opinion. Dudley's starting point was the queen's well-being; major policy issues sometimes took a back seat.

However, the two councillors had to work together and, with the passage of time, their attitudes on matters of state largely converged. They even found themselves working together against the queen. In the 1570s and 1580s, they favoured the Puritans, urged the necessity of the 'final solution' in regard to Mary Stuart, and backed military intervention in the Netherlands. In 1578, the Spanish ambassador reported that Dudley, 'notwithstanding his bad character', was in charge of policy, and Cecil powerless to oppose him. About the same time it was reported that Dudley sat up all night with the queen because she had toothache. These two were not unconnected.



Despite their dissimilarities, Dudley and Cecil occasionally found common ground, particularly regarding matters of the state

The following year, the queen finally agreed, after several changes of mind and much tergiversation, to allow Leicester to go to the aid of the Dutch Protestants with a military force.

The Netherlands campaign did not cover Leicester in glory. He found himself pig-in-the-middle between the queen and the States General, the ruling body of the Dutch Republic. Months of fighting ended inconclusively, and Dudley's absence from the Council weakened his position at home. And yet Elizabeth's confidence in her ōō never seriously wavered. In 1588, when the Spanish Armada was in the Channel and invasion a real possibility, she never contemplated putting anyone else in charge of her land forces gathered at Tilbury. She went among her troops and delivered her famous 'body of a weak and feeble woman' speech. This stirring address is often quoted, but frequently the queen's peroration is omitted:

"…My lieutenant general shall be in my stead, than whom never prince commanded a more noble or worthy subject. Not doubting but by your concord in the camp and valour in the field and your obedience to myself and my general, we shall shortly have a famous victory over these enemies of my God and of my kingdom."

This endorsement might almost have been Robert's epitaph. Less than four weeks later he was dead, probably of malaria. His passing was not universally mourned, but the one who felt it most was the one who knew him best - his queen.

> "His passing was not universally mourned, but the one who felt it most was the one who knew him best - his queen"

Elizabeth's suitors

As the best match in her parish, Elizabeth was besieged by foreign princes seeking to bring her to the altar

Written by Elizabeth Norton

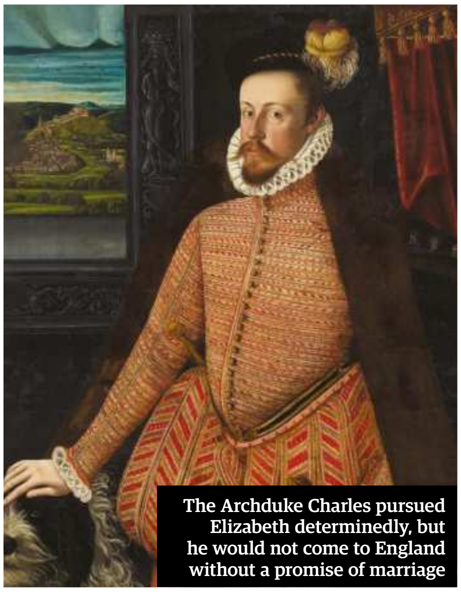
On 17 November 1558, Elizabeth became, at a stroke, 'the best marriage in her parish'. The new queen's marriage was the most important political question in England, with the princes of Europe immediately vying for her hand. As the Spanish ambassador, the count of Feria, noted, "the more I think about the business, the more certain I am that everything depends upon the husband this woman may take."

It was of paramount importance to Spain and the Habsburg Empire that Elizabeth should marry a Catholic and keep her realm allied both to Rome and their own political interests. Equally, many of the Protestant princes of Europe made their suits known, hoping that a similarity of faith would encourage Elizabeth to choose them. In an age where queens were not expected to rule alone, any man that succeeded in marrying Elizabeth could enjoy the status of king consort. Within weeks of her succession, her court began to fill up with foreign embassies, all determined that the queen's choice should fall on their master.

Charles, Archduke of Austria

A born and brought-up Catholic

1540-90



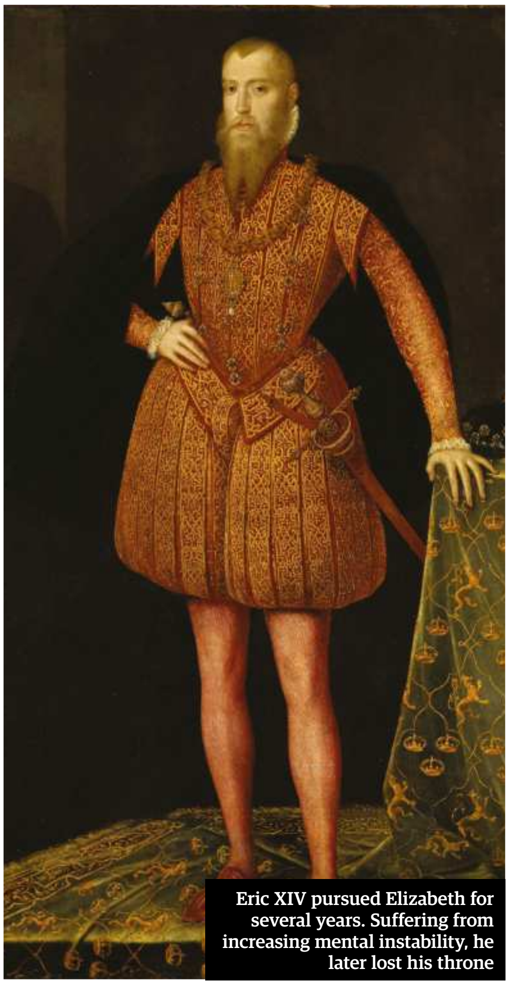
The Archduke Charles pursued Elizabeth determinedly, but he would not come to England without a promise of marriage

The Archduke Charles of Austria was Elizabeth's longest-standing suitor. He first proposed marriage in 1559, only to be rebuffed the following year. His suit was renewed in 1563, with negotiations lasting until the beginning of 1568.

Charles was the third son of the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand I, and was looking to follow his Habsburg ancestors in marrying a wealthy heiress. As such, he let his religious beliefs be misrepresented in the negotiations, with his father's ambassador later admitting he had said only that Charles "was born and brought up in the Catholic faith" without admitting that he remained devoted to that church. Many in England - William Cecil included - considered that Charles would at least be tolerant of Protestantism, and might even convert.

As well as the difficulties caused by Charles's religion, Elizabeth also disrupted the negotiations by insisting that she could not marry a man she had never seen. The Emperor's ambassadors refused to countenance this, insisting that it would be an insult to Charles if he were to come to England without a formal betrothal. Nonetheless, the marriage was still pushed by much of the Privy Council, who were in favour of Charles's suit by 1565.

A long courtship suited Elizabeth, since it both maintained friendship with the Habsburg Empire and Spain and meant that she was under less pressure in England to marry. She eventually sent the Earl of Sussex to Vienna to negotiate on her behalf, with the English peer reaching an agreement with the Emperor that would permit Charles to worship as a Catholic in private if he would attend Protestant services with the queen. With that, Elizabeth became more entrenched, refusing to allow Charles to even visit since she would never permit him to hear mass in private. By the start of 1568 the negotiations were over.



Eric XIV pursued Elizabeth for several years. Suffering from increasing mental instability, he later lost his throne

Eric XIV of Sweden

A persistent Swede 1533-77

Eric XIV seemed for some time to be the most likely suitor to win Elizabeth's hand. In November 1557, before Elizabeth had even become queen of England, his father, King Gustavus Vasa, sent an embassy to England to raise the possibility of marriage between the two.

Upon arriving, the ambassador caused a stir at court by going straight to Elizabeth to deliver a letter from Prince Eric. It was only news that Elizabeth had turned the ambassador away, stating that she "had never heard of his Majesty before this time" that mollified Queen Mary's anger.

In September 1559, Eric's younger brother, Duke John of Finland, arrived in London to court Elizabeth on his behalf. In spite of being rebuffed, the affable John remained in London. In December 1559, he put forward a new proposal, suggesting that Eric could commit to live in England even when he had inherited his father's crown.

Apart from his Protestantism, there was little to recommend Eric to the queen. His family were newly established on the Swedish throne, and the kingdom was outside the usual English sphere of influence. John returned to Sweden in April 1560, still optimistic about his brother's suit, so much so that Eric himself proposed to come, although his accession to the throne in September 1560 meant he remained home in Sweden. Nonetheless, he sent a new emissary in early 1561, again pressing his suit.

Eric eventually began to look elsewhere for a bride, making overtures towards Mary, Queen of Scots among others. He continued to chase Elizabeth's hand, however, writing to her in October 1562 and 1563. In refusing to marry Eric, Elizabeth had a lucky escape. Suffering from mental instability, he was deposed from his throne in 1568 and imprisoned and probably murdered by his brother, Duke John.

Henri, Duke of Anjou

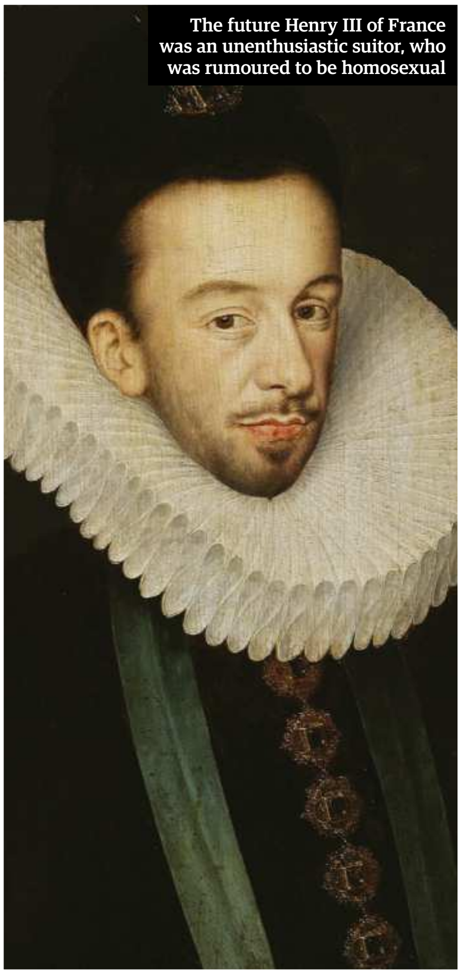
An unenthusiastic Frenchman 1551-89

In the early years of Elizabeth's reign, the idea of a French marriage was problematic, since the sons of Henry II and Catherine de' Medici were still children. Their eldest son, Francis II had, in any event, married Mary, Queen of Scots, although his younger brother, Charles IX of France, was once considered a potential suitor for the queen.

A more serious approach came from the third brother, Henry, Duke of Anjou, who would later succeed his brother as Henry III. The marriage was first suggested in June 1568, although negotiations floundered due to the Catholic Henry's own opposition to marrying a Protestant. The scheme was suggested again in October 1570, and was intended to help build an anti-Spanish alliance between England and France. It was also hoped in England that the marriage would neutralise French support for Mary, Queen of Scots, who was then imprisoned by Elizabeth.

No one was particularly enthusiastic about the match. Henry's mother, Catherine de' Medici, considered Elizabeth too old, and asked if there were alternative English candidates. Even when she agreed to proceed, Catherine was unable to persuade her son to agree to marry Elizabeth until February 1571, and then only very reluctantly. Negotiations began, but soon stalled. Anjou's staunch Catholicism was a major stumbling block. He required a Catholic wedding ceremony and freedom to worship in England.

Anjou was never the most ardent of suitors, once complaining that Elizabeth was an old creature with a sore leg. More rudely, he called her a "public whore". There were also rumours that Henry was homosexual. While both the English and French were involved in lengthy negotiations, the match never seemed likely to succeed.

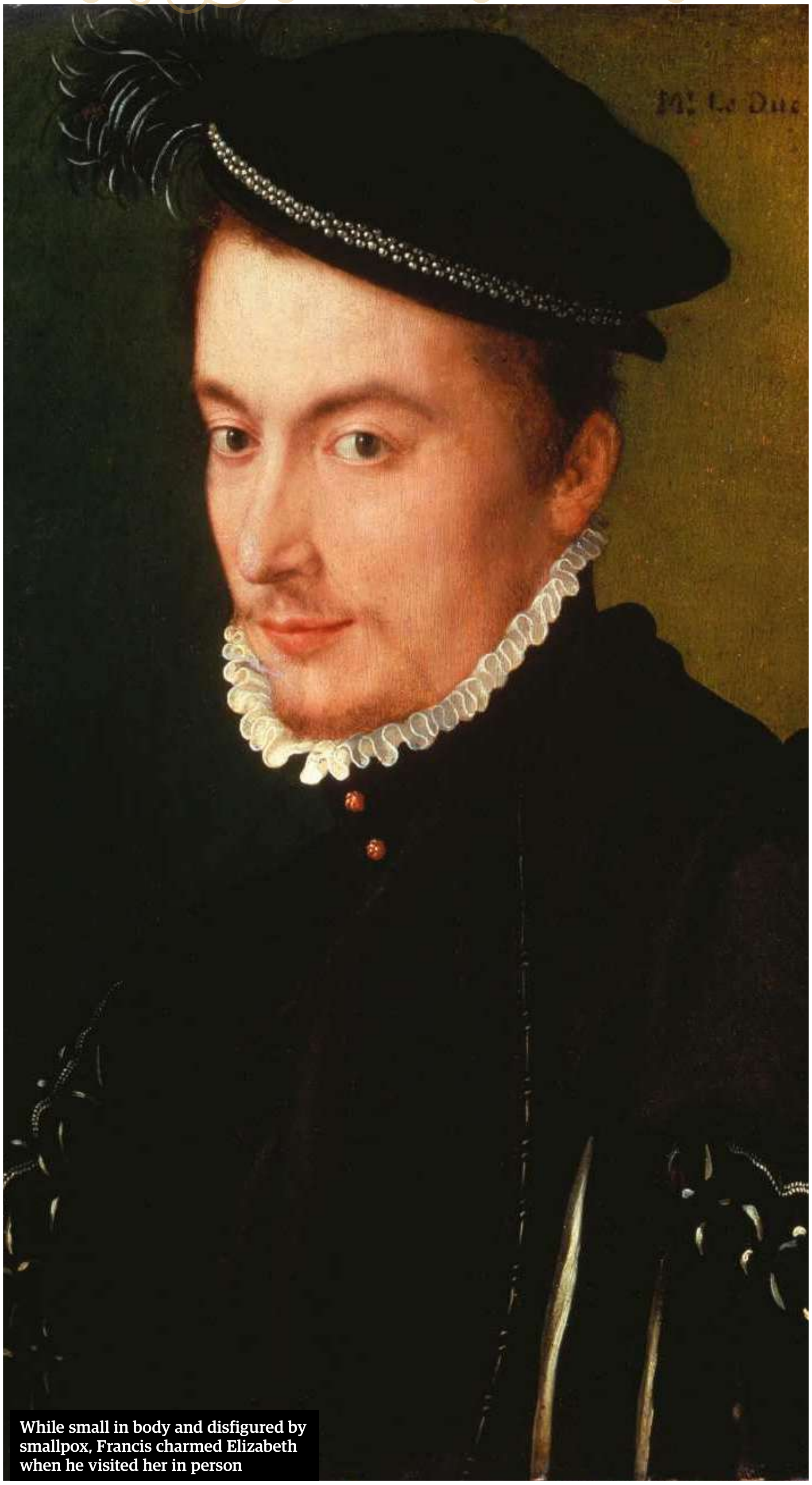


The future Henry III of France was an unenthusiastic suitor, who was rumoured to be homosexual

Francis, Duke of Alençon (later Anjou)

Queen Elizabeth's 'Frog'

1555-84



While small in body and disfigured by smallpox, Francis charmed Elizabeth when he visited her in person

Francis, Duke of Alençon (who was later upgraded to the duchy of Anjou) was the youngest son of Henry II of France and Catherine de' Medici. Tiny in stature, he was disfigured by smallpox scars although, as one English report had it, the pock marks were "no great disfigurement in the rest of his face because they are rather thick than deep or great." Except, the report continued, for those at the end of his nose that were unmissable. It was to be hoped that the right woman could see past all this, with God moving 'the heart of the beholder'.

Alençon first proposed to Elizabeth in 1571 when he was 16, but the 38-year-old queen baulked at the idea of marrying a teenager. He proved persistent, writing in August 1573 that he was nearly dead for her love.

On 5 January 1579, Alençon's 'chief darling' (as one source called him) and Master of the Wardrobe, Jean de Simier, arrived in England to woo Elizabeth on his master's behalf. Simier worked his charm and, by April, was feeling rather hopeful although, as he wrote, he would wait "till the curtain is drawn, the candle out, and Monsieur in bed." At the same time as wooing the queen, Simier was negotiating a marriage treaty, with Alençon requesting a coronation, joint authority with Elizabeth and a pension of £60,000.

The negotiations soon became bogged down, and the impasse was only broken when Alençon arrived at Greenwich incognito on 17 August 1579 and was immediately met by the queen. The pair gave every sign of being attracted to each other, with Elizabeth nicknaming Alençon her 'frog'. After a visit of ten days, Alençon presented the queen with a diamond ring, and was soon writing to complain that he was "dying for want of news from her."

Elizabeth would not be rushed to the altar. A marriage treaty was finally agreed in November 1581 and Alençon hurried to England, hoping to wed. As the pair talked of love, Elizabeth took a ring from her finger and placed it on Alençon's, suggesting that they had promised to marry. The next day, she changed her mind. Complaining of the "lightness of women" and "the inconstancy of islanders", Alençon agreed to a perpetual betrothal in exchange for funds to finance his campaigns in the Netherlands. When he died in 1584, Elizabeth placed her court in mourning.

Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy

A brother-in-law's choice

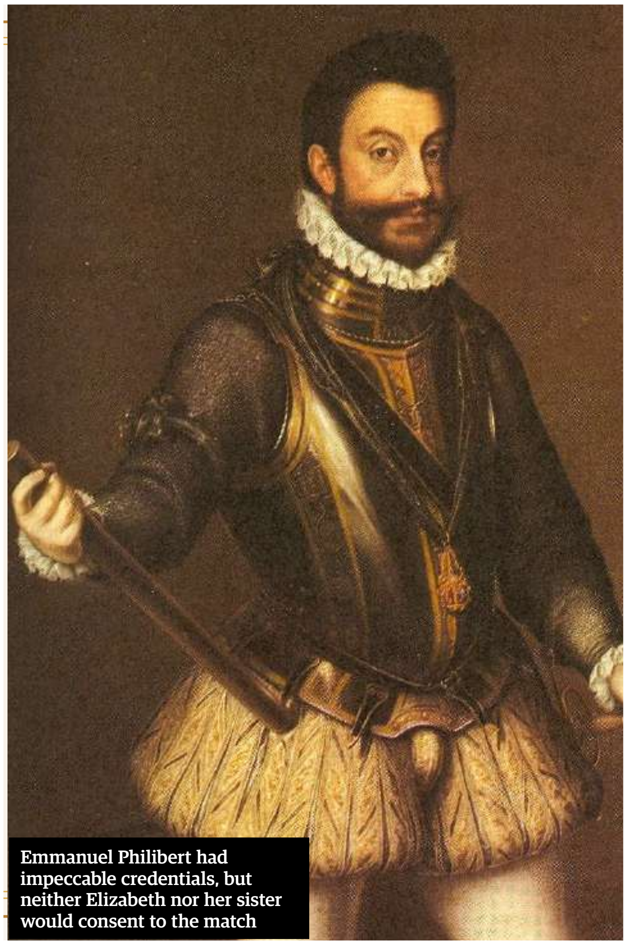
1528-80

Elizabeth's marriage was of great importance during her time as heir to the throne. In late 1554 her brother-in-law, Philip II of Spain, began to consider possible husbands for the princess, anxious to ensure that she was married to a Catholic ally of his Habsburg dynasty. His choice fell on his cousin, Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy.

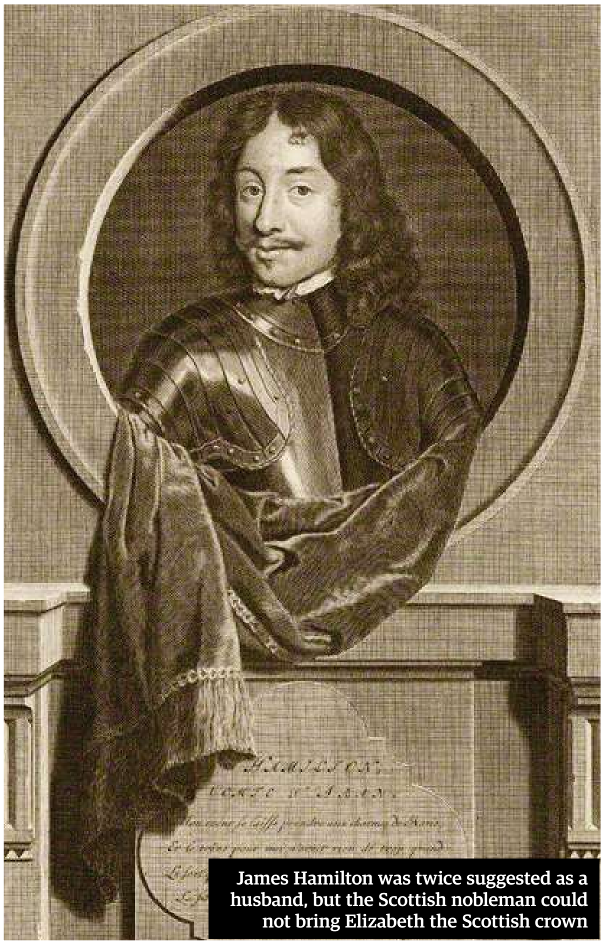
As far as Philip was concerned, Philibert was an excellent choice. He was a staunch Catholic, of a similar age to the young Elizabeth and of royal blood. He was also firmly allied to the Habsburg dynasty, with his father having lost most of his Italian lands as a result of this alliance.

Philip worked hard for the match during his visit to England in 1557, but neither Mary nor Elizabeth would agree to it. Elizabeth, who had already begun to assert her intention to remain unmarried, had no wish to wed a Catholic. Additionally, Mary refused to recognise Elizabeth as her heiress - something that was required for the match to proceed.

Philip continued to press the marriage up until Mary's death in November 1558, but on Elizabeth's accession the matter was finally brought to a close.



Emmanuel Philibert had impeccable credentials, but neither Elizabeth nor her sister would consent to the match



James Hamilton was twice suggested as a husband, but the Scottish nobleman could not bring Elizabeth the Scottish crown

James Hamilton, 3rd Earl of Arran

A Protestant neighbour

c.1532-1609

Another possible husband came from much closer to home. James Hamilton was the son of the 2nd Earl of Arran, who acted as regent of Scotland during the infancy of Mary, Queen of Scots. As early as December 1543 it was suggested that the Earl was seeking to marry his eldest son to Princess Elizabeth, although nothing came of the match.

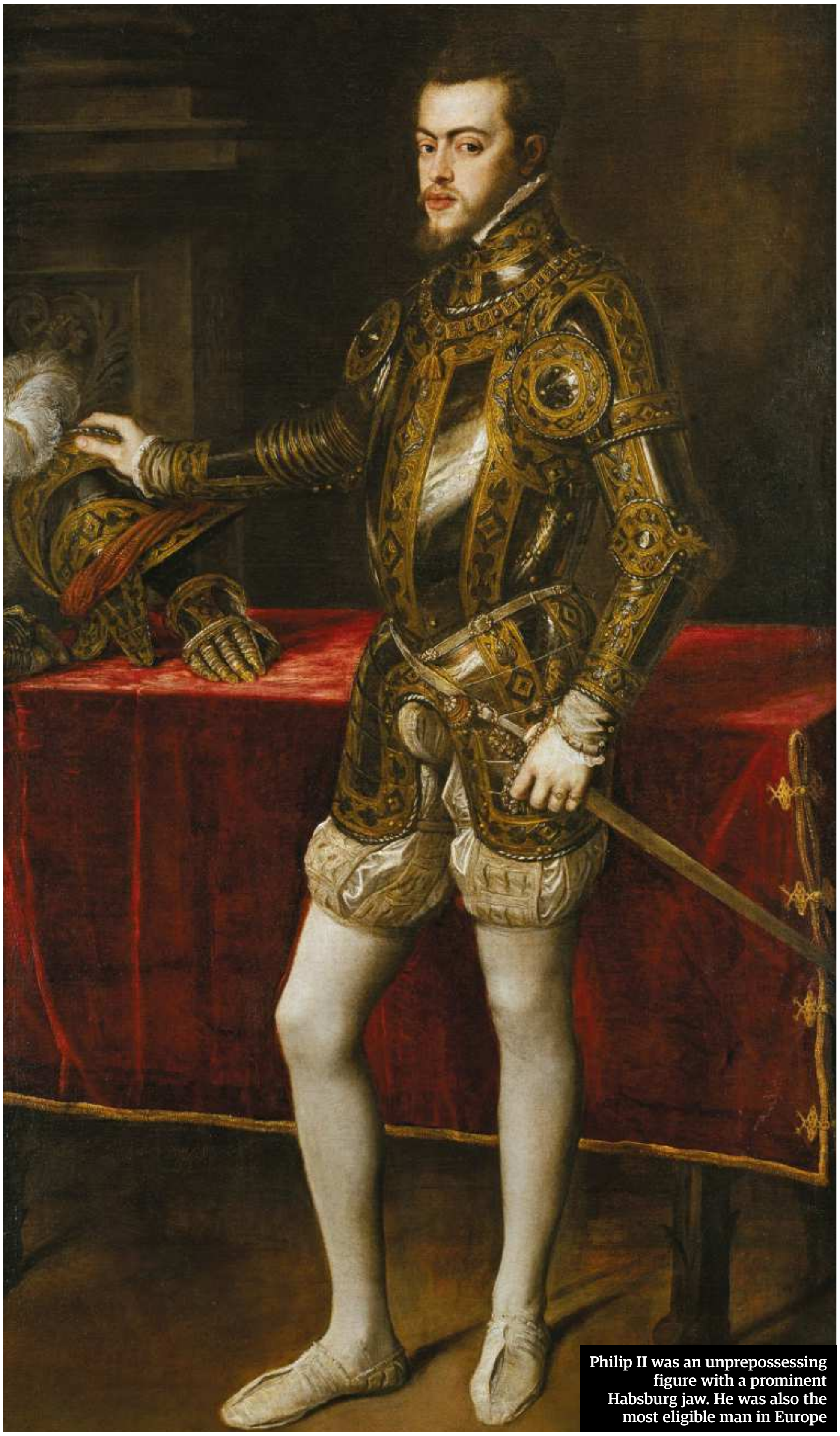
Hamilton's name was put forward again in June 1559 by both English and Scottish Protestants, since the pair were 'mariable both and the chief upholders of God's religion'. William Cecil raised the match in March 1560, with the Scottish parliament discussing the marriage in August 1560 before sending an embassy to England in November.

As a descendant of James II of Scotland, Arran was of royal blood and, after Queen Mary, the next legitimate heir to Scotland. Since the marriage would bring a closer union between the two neighbouring kingdoms, it had much to recommend it. However, Hamilton was not actually king of Scots, and could bring no international alliance. Accordingly, Elizabeth rejected the proposal to the Scottish ambassadors on 8 December 1560.

Philip II of Spain

A reluctant suitor

1527-98



Philip II was an unprepossessing figure with a prominent Habsburg jaw. He was also the most eligible man in Europe

One of Elizabeth's earliest suitors was also the most reluctant. Philip II of Spain had endured a four-year marriage to Elizabeth's half-sister, Mary, which he had undertaken as a means of ensuring England remained allied with Spain. Professing himself only mildly regretful at his wife's death, he had little wish to undertake a second English marriage. He knew Elizabeth well and disapproved of her, particularly since he suspected that she would take the English church away from Rome.

At first, Philip continued to press the candidacy of his cousin, Emanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, but was quick to realise that there was no prospect of success. Due to disputes over the distribution of the Habsburg Empire, he did not support the suit of his cousins, the Archdukes Ferdinand and Charles. With no other acceptable candidate, Philip bowed to political pressure and agreed to "render this service to God" and marry the heretical Elizabeth.

Philip of Spain, who with Mary's death had been widowed twice, was the most prestigious match in Europe. In return for his hand, he expected Elizabeth to fulfil certain conditions, including seeking absolution from the Pope. This was necessary since it would ensure that he married a Catholic and that it was clear to the world that it was he who had converted her. He also wanted an agreement that he would not have to live in England.

Privately, Philip was downcast, referring to himself in January 1559 as "a condemned man, awaiting his fate." Pious Philip believed that his sacrifice in marrying Elizabeth would save the people of England from heresy. He does not seem to have ever contemplated that his suit might be rejected.

A marriage to Philip was not without its problems, most immediately that as brother and sister-in-law a papal dispensation would be required. Since Elizabeth's claims to legitimacy hung on the opinion that the pope had no power to dispense a marriage between Henry VIII and his sister-in-law, Catherine of Aragon, this was a stumbling block. Elizabeth herself had no desire to marry Philip. Finally, on 14 March 1559 she bluntly told the Spanish ambassador that she could not marry Philip because she was a Protestant. The Spanish king soon married a Catholic French princess instead.

Frederick II of Denmark

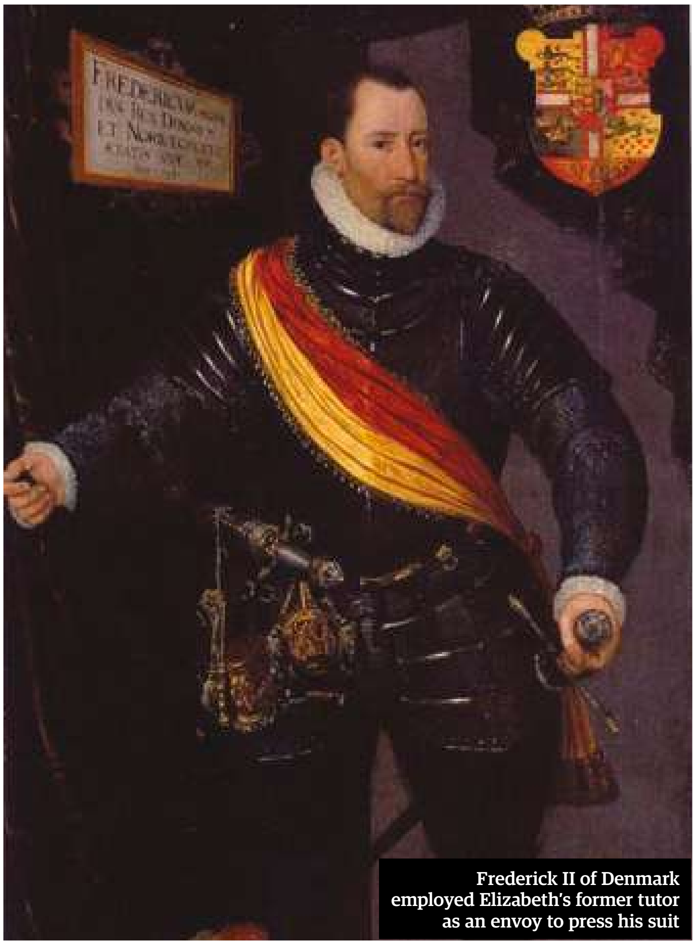
A new proposal from an old suitor

1534-88

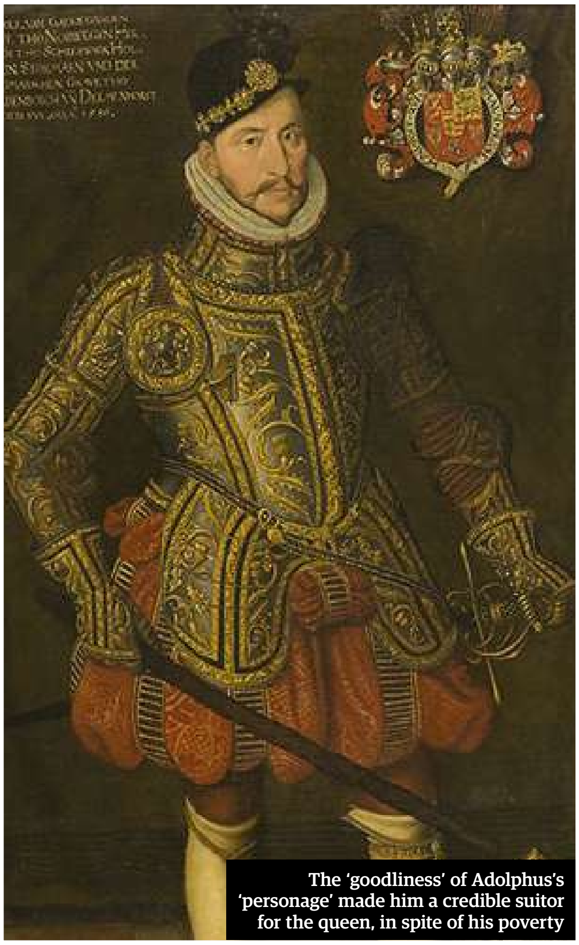
A marriage between Princess Elizabeth and the future Frederick II of Denmark was first mooted in 1550. In July 1559 the king sent Johannes Spithovius to Elizabeth to reopen negotiations.

On arrival, the Danish envoy was concerned to note the high number of suitors already present at the English court although, as a Protestant, it was hoped that Elizabeth would look favourably on the Danish king. Spithovius was an excellent choice of envoy, since he had been employed as Elizabeth's tutor between 1549 and 1553. She was fond of him, and granted him a personal audience.

While Elizabeth received letters from Frederick and admitted to Spithovius that she thought the king handsome, she quickly declined the proposal. Although she disappointed the Danish king, England and Denmark remained on friendly terms. Frederick's daughter, Anne, eventually went on to become queen of England, thanks to her marriage to Elizabeth's successor, James VI of Scotland.



Frederick II of Denmark employed Elizabeth's former tutor as an envoy to press his suit



The 'goodliness' of Adolphus's 'personage' made him a credible suitor for the queen, in spite of his poverty

Adolphus, Duke of Holstein

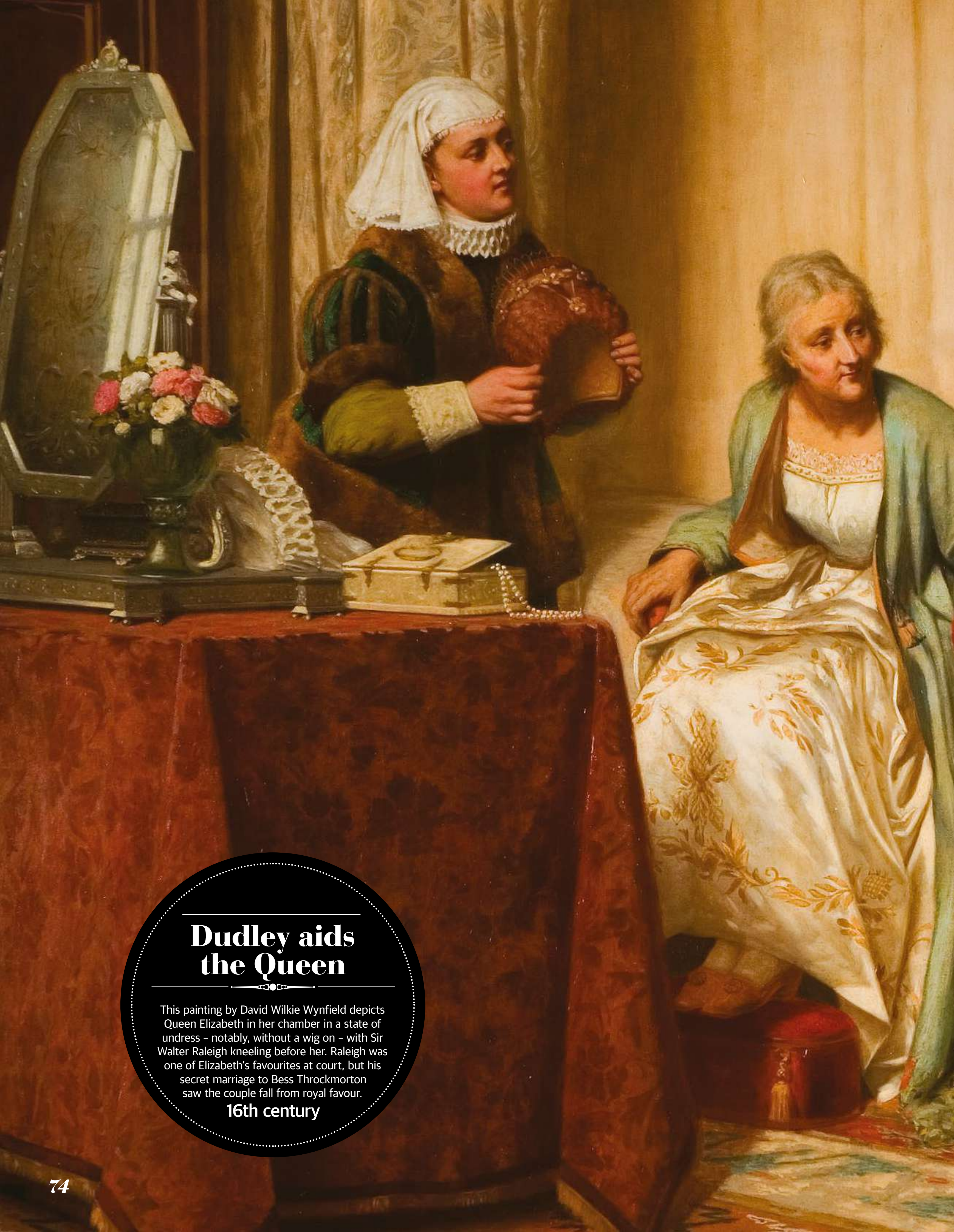
A handsome Dane

1526-86

While Frederick II threw his hat into the ring, the main Danish contender for Elizabeth's hand was his uncle, Adolphus, Duke of Holstein. Although an impoverished younger son, Adolphus was considered to have a real prospect of success. He was the complete package, with one contemporary commenting on "the nobility of his house, the goodliness of his personage, his power, his friends, and also that he professeth the same religion."

Adolphus arrived in England in late March 1560 and formally proposed to Elizabeth. The English were interested in employing Adolphus's troops in the war against Scotland. He was therefore provided with "a magnificent reception", and admitted to the Order of the Garter. Tellingly, he was told there would be no answer to his suit until after the Scottish campaign.

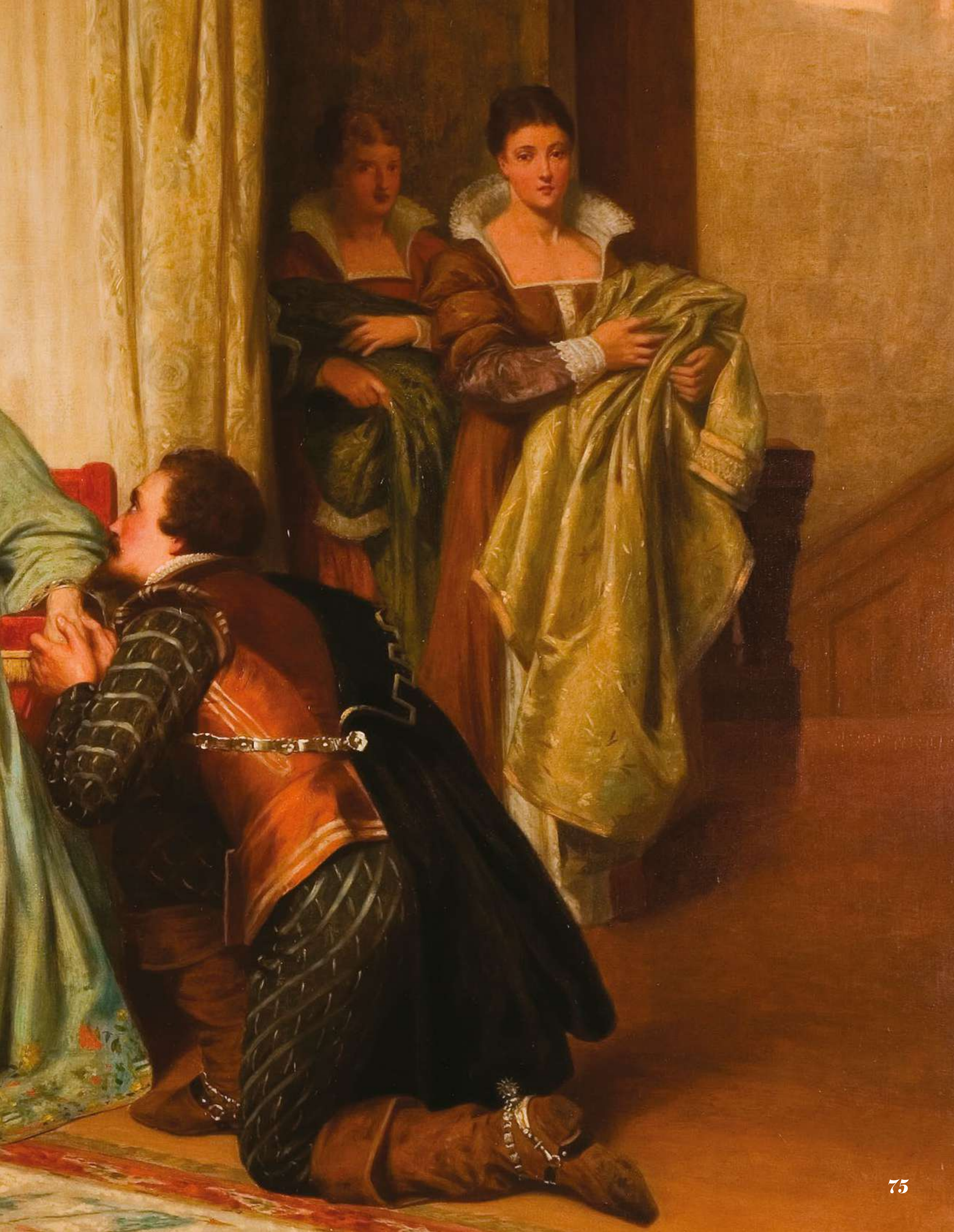
When he pressed marriage again after peace was signed in July 1560, he was informed by William Cecil that the queen had no interest in marriage. Returning home to Denmark that month, Adolphus continued to hope that marriage between himself and Elizabeth could be possible. However, after writing directly to the queen, he was informed bluntly that she rejected his suit, and could bring no international alliance.

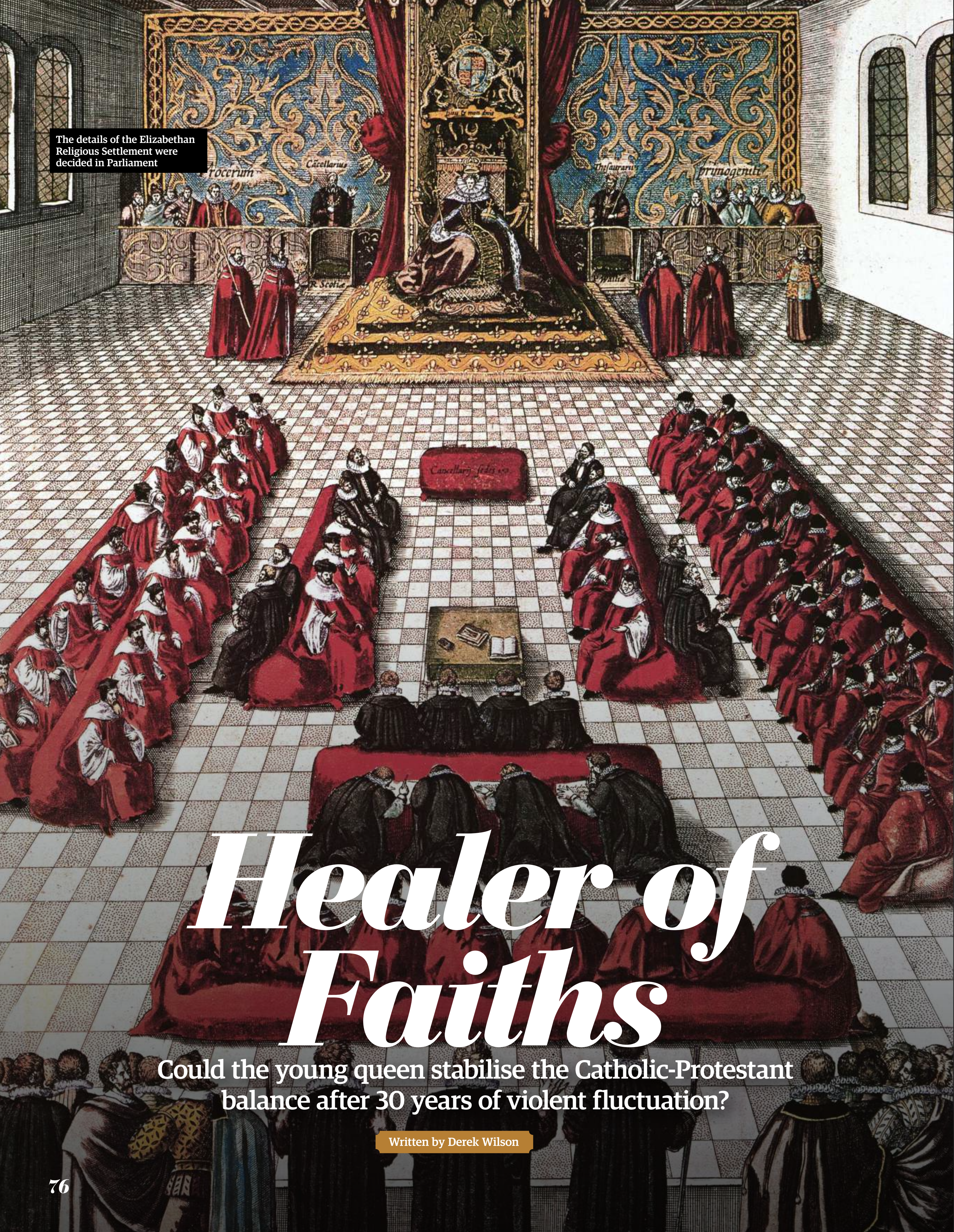


Dudley aids the Queen

This painting by David Wilkie Wynfield depicts Queen Elizabeth in her chamber in a state of undress – notably, without a wig on – with Sir Walter Raleigh kneeling before her. Raleigh was one of Elizabeth's favourites at court, but his secret marriage to Bess Throckmorton saw the couple fall from royal favour.

16th century




Procerum
Cancellarius
Thesaurarius
primogeniti

The details of the Elizabethan Religious Settlement were decided in Parliament

Healer of Faiths

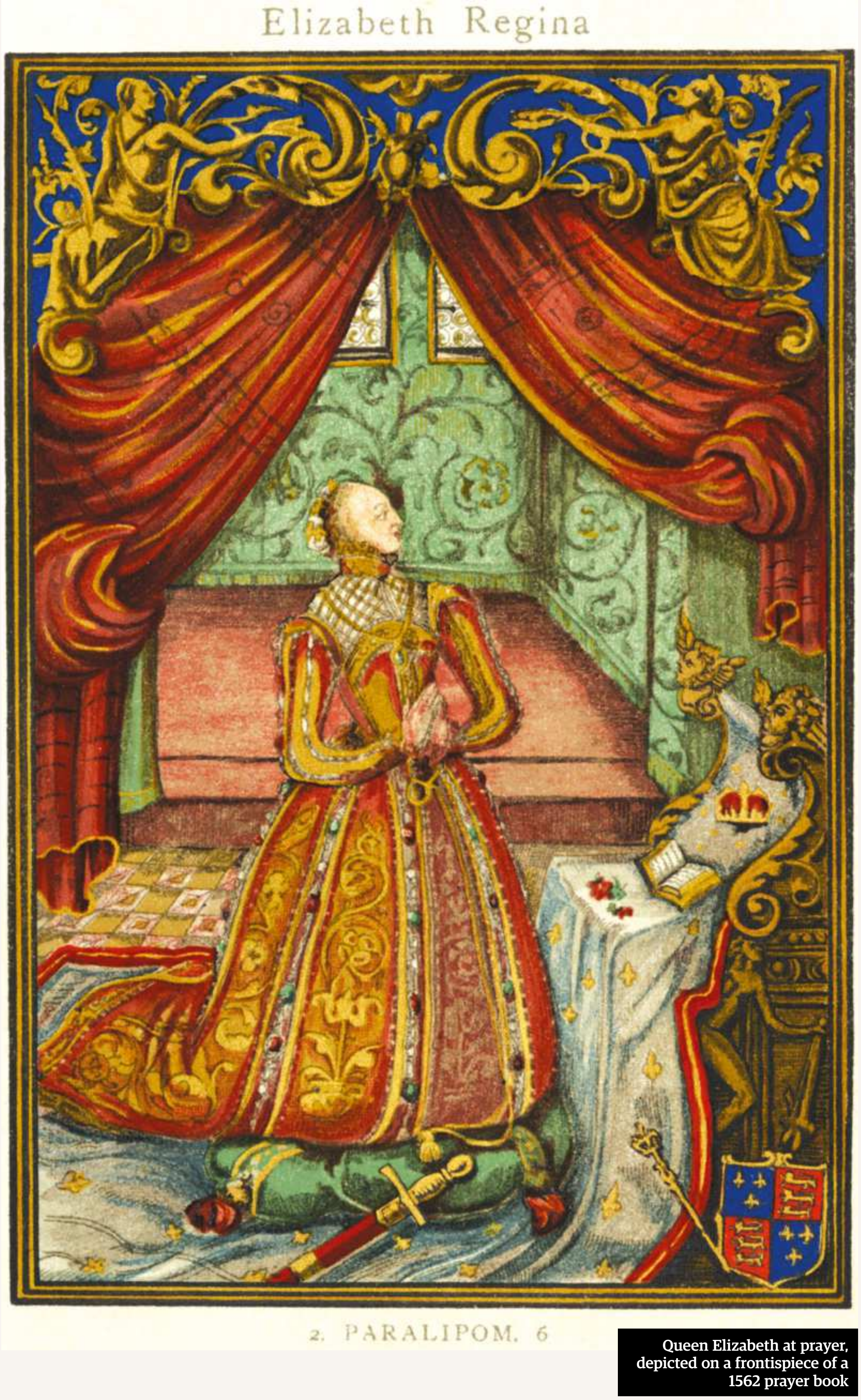
Could the young queen stabilise the Catholic-Protestant balance after 30 years of violent fluctuation?

Written by Derek Wilson

Three years before Elizabeth came to the throne, churchmen and politicians meeting in Augsburg had attempted to make peace between Catholics and Lutherans in the Holy Roman Empire after a generation of religious discord. The principle upon which state religion was to be established was, a few years later, encapsulated in the Latin tag, 'cuius regio, eius religio', 'the religion of the ruler is the religion of the nation'. This was something of a breakthrough in that it theoretically preserved the integrity of the state. The Pope no longer held sway in lands which had adopted Lutheranism and people whose consciences would not permit them to embrace the state religion were free to leave. One result was an increase in religious migration. Unfortunately, cuius regio eius religio had already been made obsolete by history. In countries like England, where papal authority had been discarded, several brands of Protestantism were competing for the loyalty of the population. That would not have mattered if people were allowed freedom of worship, but this was a concept quite alien to the spirit of the times. Uniformity of religious belief and practice was accepted by most people as essential to the peace and harmony of any nation. Church and State were, in effect, two sides of the same coin.

In England, establishing religious unity was rendered problematic by two factors. One was the determination of the papacy and its military champion, Philip II of Spain, to re-convert the country to Catholicism. The other was the return of the 'Marian exiles'. These were Protestant clergy and lay people who had fled to the continent to avoid persecution during the reign of Mary Tudor. Most of them had settled in centres of reformed faith such as Geneva and Zurich. There they had encountered what seemed to them to be perfect churches in terms of Bible-based doctrine, worship and church-state polity. Several of the returning clergy obtained positions as parish clergy or bishops, replacing ousted Marian priests and they expected to have a say in the shaping of the Elizabethan church.

Within a month of the new queen's accession things were already getting out of hand. Rival sermons were being preached and demonstrations were being held in favour of the competing faiths. On 27 December 1558, Elizabeth issued a proclamation clamping down on all preaching and banning innovations in worship "until consultation may be had by Parliament, by her majesty and her three estates of this realm". The queen declared her intention of restoring "universal charity and concord



Queen Elizabeth at prayer, depicted on a frontispiece of a 1562 prayer book

"Rival sermons were being preached and demonstrations were being held in favour of the competing faiths" among her people". She may not, at that time, have realised the exact scale of the struggle she was embarking on.

Her personal preference could be described as 'moderate Protestant'. She was committed to most of the doctrine and worship provision enshrined in the 1552 Prayer Book of Edward VI, but she had a love of decoration and ornate music, which to the more extreme Protestants smacked of 'popery'. For example, she was fond of the music of William Byrd, who was a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, but also increasingly committed to Catholicism. Like most contemporary monarchs, she was extremely wary of anything that tended toward civil unrest. This included overenthusiastic purging of church interiors from 'objects of superstition' and zealous preaching. In a speech to church leaders in 1585, and referring to Catholic recusants and Puritans, she quoted an Italian proverb, "From mine enemies let me defend myself but from a pretensed friend, good Lord deliver me."

The proclamation had made it clear the details of the religious settlement were to be decided in Parliament. The church's governing body, Convocation, was not to be consulted. In practical terms this meant a conflict between the House of Lords and the House of Commons. In the upper house the bishops and their conservative allies among the nobility had a clear majority. The reverse was true in the Commons, where the newly elected members from the gentry and mercantile classes were joined by a number of returning exiles. When Parliament convened on 25 January, Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, reiterated the priority of religious settlement. Members, he instructed, were to debate without resort to "sophistical, captious and frivolous arguments" more suited to theologians than parliamentarians. Nor were they to hurl back and forth terms of abuse, such as 'papist' and 'heretic'. Work began on the religious question on 9 February and the task was scheduled to be completed by Easter, a goal that turned out to be optimistic. It was not just party strife that made things difficult. All the religious legislation of the previous three reigns had to be examined, sifted and either repealed or reworded to fit the new situation. Small wonder that the parliamentarians found themselves drafting, redrafting and amending the measures that came before them.

The two core issues were the royal supremacy over the English church and defining the doctrinal and liturgical identity of that church. Initially the government proposed two acts to deal with the issues separately. The Supremacy Bill immediately ran into difficulties - and not only from Catholics opposed to the dethroning of the Pope. Some parliamentarians, while happy to see the church brought back under the authority of the Crown, questioned whether this was possible when the crown was worn by a woman.

"To promote a woman to bear rule, superiority, dominion or empire above any realm is repugnant to nature, contrary to God and, finally, it is the subversion of good order, of all equity and justice." So wrote the firebrand Scottish Calvinist, John Knox, in a recently published book, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*. Knox certainly did not have Elizabeth in mind but he raised issues about the divine ordering of human society, which could only muddy the waters for the legislators at Westminster. By 21 February the original two-statute settlement had been abandoned in favour of a composite measure. If the government hoped by this means that the thorn trees of politico-religious objection could be hidden in the varied undergrowth of a legislative forest they miscalculated. The bill tottered through the lower house without too much difficulty. In the Lords its fate was very different.

John Jewel, one of the returning exiles summarised the (in his view) unfavourable situation but tried to put on a brave face:

"Work began on the religious question on 9 February and the task was scheduled to be completed by Easter, a goal that turned out to be optimistic"

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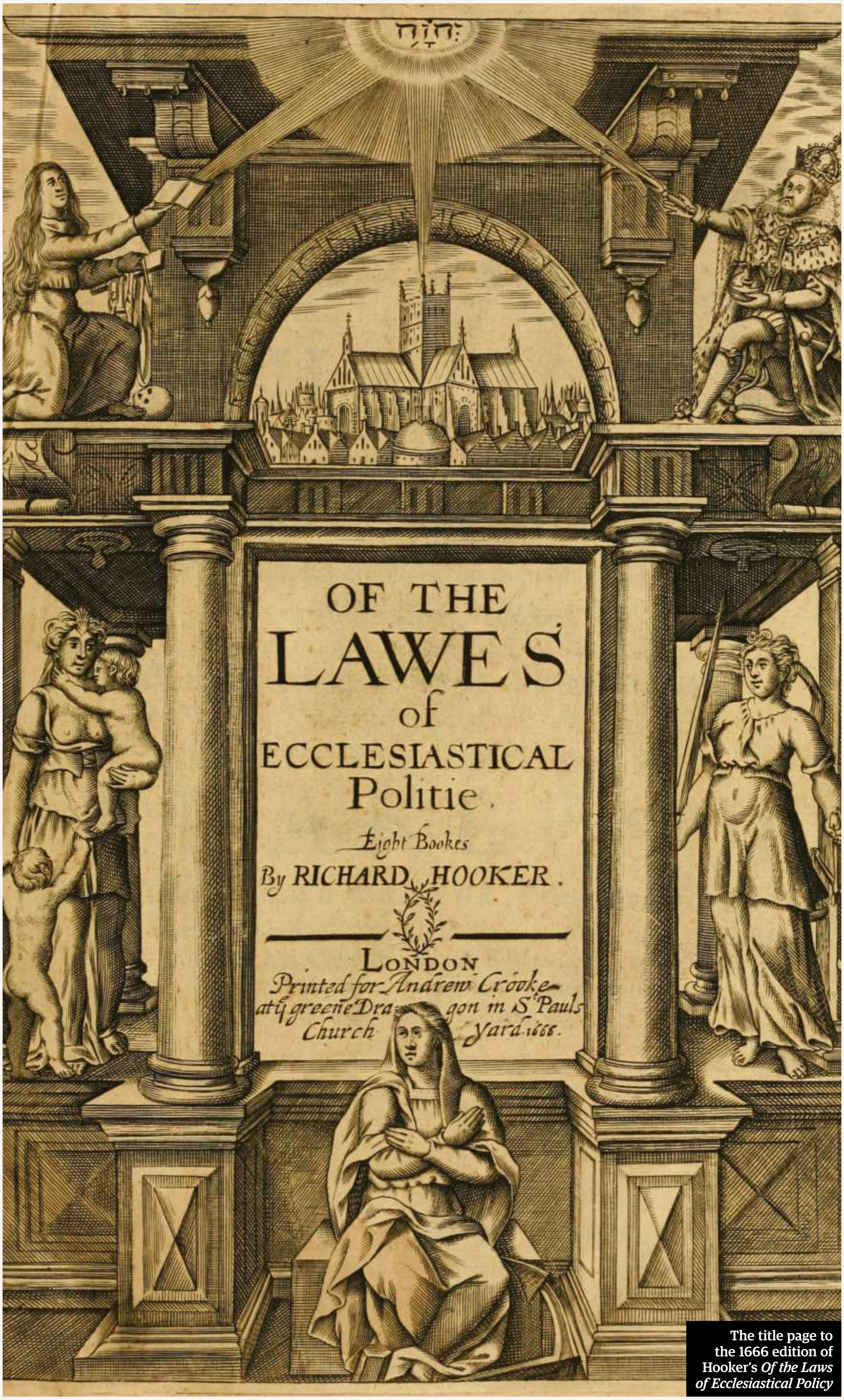
Elizabeth was particularly fond of the music by William Byrd

A belated justification of the Elizabethan Settlement

The successful establishment of the Church of England as a halfway house between Catholic ceremonial and Puritan doctrinal rigidity was in large measure due to the longevity of the queen. Her 44-year reign saw off Catholic plots and determined attempts to impose a Presbyterian-style religious polity. By the time of her death in 1603 most of her people had simply 'got used to' the state church and its rituals and it would take 40 years of intransigence and royal arrogance by Stuart kings and clergy to reopen old wounds.

However, some acknowledgement should be made of Richard Hooker's theological underpinning of the Elizabethan status quo. Hooker (1554-1600) was a career cleric who led an unremarkable life until his last few years. Having been drawn into conflict with the Puritans, he wrote a massive, eight-book defence of the Anglican system, a monumental work of theology and philosophy. *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Policy* was based on the threefold foundation of Scripture, tradition and reason and made the strongest possible case for the existence of a national church with the sovereign appointed by God as its governor. The book was only published in its entirety after Hooker's death but, in the ensuing century, it was regarded as second only to the Bible by 'high church' scholars.



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OF THE
LAWES
of
ECCLESIASTICAL
Politie.
Eight Bookes
By RICHARD HOOKER.

LONDON
Printed for Andrew Crooke
at ye greene Dragon in St Pauls
Church yard.1666.

The title page to the 1666 edition of Hooker's *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Policy*

"Like most contemporary monarchs, she was extremely wary of anything that tended toward civil unrest"

"The bishops are a great hindrance to us: for being [...] among the nobility and leading men in the upper house, and having none there on our side to expose their artifices and confute their falsehoods, they reign as sole monarchs in the midst of ignorant and weak men, and easily overreach our little party, either by their numbers, or their reputation for learning. The queen, meanwhile, while she openly favours our cause, yet is wonderfully afraid of allowing any innovations: this is owing partly to her own friends, by whose advice everything is carried on, and partly to the influence of Count Feria, a Spaniard and Philip's ambassador. She is, however, firmly and prudently, and piously following up her purpose, though somewhat more slowly than we could wish. And though the beginnings have hitherto seemed somewhat unfavourable, there is nevertheless reason to hope that all will be well at last."

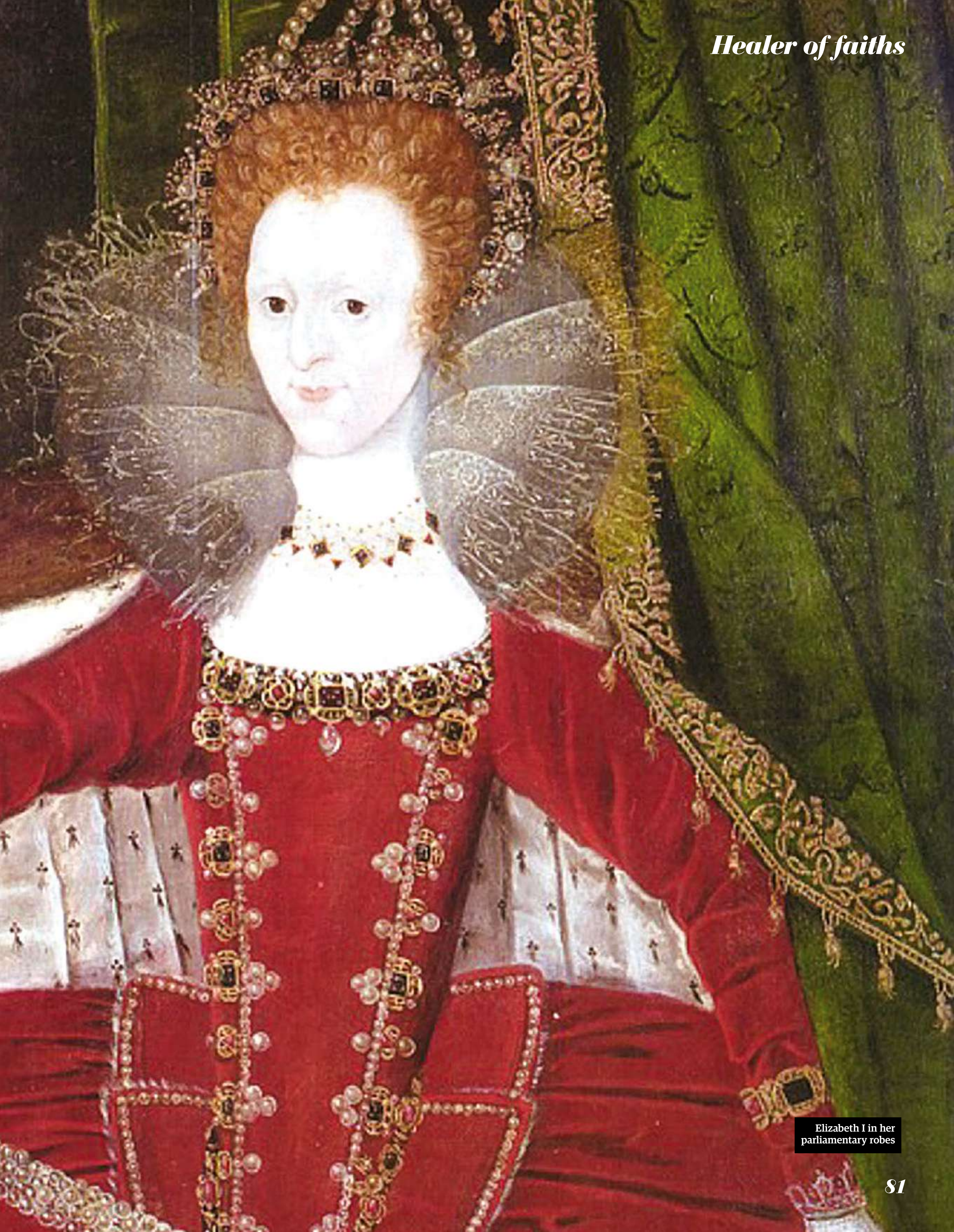
He had good cause for anxiety. Most of the nobility were, by nature, conservative and nervous of change. They were easily led by the bishops in the upper house and the bishops, who had a more international perspective, were in bullish mood. England was ringed by Catholic nations and it seemed scarcely feasible that it could maintain its religious independence in the long term. If anything were to happen to Elizabeth, the last of the Tudor line, there was no powerful Protestant prince to whom advocates of reform could turn for succor. The parliamentary balance being as it was, it seemed the Catholic majority, led by the bishops, held all the aces. And, for the bishops and most of the lesser clergy, the stakes were very high. If papal authority was rejected they would lose their jobs. As a result, debate in the upper house was prolonged and increasingly bad-tempered. At one point the Earl of Bedford denounced his Catholic opponents for consorting with whores in Rome. The bill, which had arrived in the upper house on 28 February, did not emerge until 18 March, by which time a host of amendments had rendered it almost unrecognisable. In the resultant confusion only one thing was clear: there was no chance of meeting the Easter deadline.

"England was ringed by Catholic nations and it seemed scarcely feasible that it could maintain its religious independence in the long term"

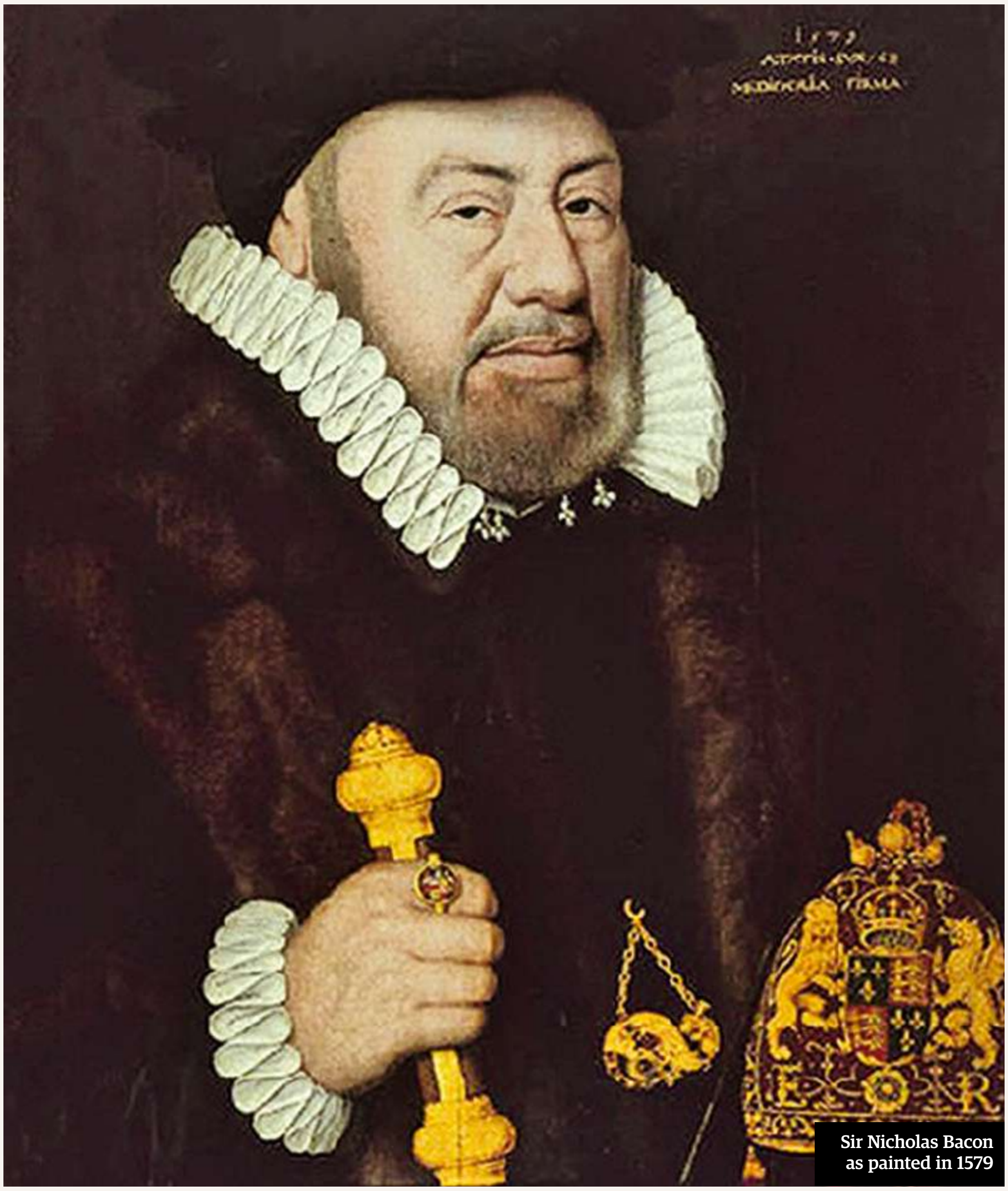
A drastic change of tactics was called for if the stalemate between the government and the Catholic rump in Parliament was to be broken. Elizabeth and her Council resolved to use the festive business break to their advantage. They staged a public debate in Westminster Abbey to air all the doctrinal issues involved. Ostensibly, it was to be an academic disputation between two teams of scholars, but unlike traditional confrontation in the theology schools, the language employed would be English. This would ensure the audience (including foreign diplomats) would follow the debate and be satisfied that all participants had had a fair hearing. The reality was that the government rigged the procedure so that the Catholic champions were at a disadvantage. They were obliged to speak first. This allowed their opponents to answer all the points raised, with no comeback from the papists allowed.

The disputation began on 31 March and was scheduled to finish before Parliament reassembled on 3 April. The points for debate were the need for services in the vernacular, the freedom of national churches to decide their own ceremonies and the nature of Christ's presence in the communion service. In fact, the event never got much further than the first day. When the parties reconvened on 2 April, the Catholic bishops complained about the rules of engagement. When Nicholas Bacon, in charge of proceedings, refused to make any changes, the 'debate' became a slanging match and half of the Catholic team walked out. Bacon responded by citing them for contempt and consigning the two more outspoken bishops to the Tower.

This demonstration of the government's intent to have its policies accepted was not lost on members of the legislature. When they reconvened they were presented with new bills. The business managers had returned to the strategy of separating supremacy and uniformity. To show they had listened to criticism, changes had been made to both bills. In order to placate those who balked at the idea of a woman holding authority in the house of God, Elizabeth took the title 'Supreme Governor', rather than 'Supreme Head'. The wording of the bill was softened as far as possible. Whereas Henry VIII had been proclaimed 'the only supreme head in earth of the church of England', the new statute described his daughter as 'the only supreme governor of this realm, as well in all spiritual and ecclesiastical things or causes as temporal'. It came down to the same thing, of course, but it left individual clergy to decide whether they could square with their consciences the new definition of supremacy. When they were required to take the Oath of Supremacy no more than 15 percent of parish clergy refused. The Act even secured the consent of the House of Lords despite episcopal resistance.



Elizabeth I in her parliamentary robes



Sir Nicholas Bacon as painted in 1579

"In the first year of Elizabeth's reign, the ground rules for the English church had been laid"

Not so the Act of Uniformity. The government went as far as it could to meet the requirements of the traditionalists. Though Latin mass was outlawed and vernacular liturgy established as the only lawful worship permitted in the realm; though all subjects were compelled to attend their parish churches on pain of a fine of twelve pence per month; though Catholic ornaments and clerical apparel that had been used in Mary's reign were no longer permitted; yet certain modifications were introduced to the reformed patterns of worship in the interests of inclusivity. During the reign of Edward VI, two steps along the Reformation road had been taken. The 1549 Book of Common Prayer had laid out the stall of the Protestant English church. In 1552 a revised prayer book had been issued clarifying certain points of doctrine and removing possible Catholic loopholes. This book was reinstated by Elizabeth with a few minor tweaks. The most crucial concerned the administration of the bread and wine at Holy Communion. In the second book the recipient was enjoined to "remember that Christ died for thee and be thankful". Now, words from the first book were reintroduced: "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given… the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which was shed for thee preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life." While not endorsing the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, the change left the door ajar for those who believed in the real, physical presence of Christ in the elements. It seems Elizabeth had endorsed this change, believing, as she said, "In the sacrament of the altar, some thinks [one] thing, some other, whose judgement is best God knows."

Despite these eirenical gestures, the bishops in the House of Lords dug their heels in. They could do nothing else, for the nature of Christ's sacramental presence went to the very heart of the Reformation conflict that had shredded western Christendom for more than a generation. The Act of Uniformity squeezed through the upper house by three votes. Had the imprisoned bishops been present to add their voices to those of all their colleagues who opposed it, the outcome would have been different. The Act of Uniformity made history by being the first doctrinal measure to become law without a single episcopal vote being cast in its favour.

Thus, in the first year of Elizabeth's reign, the ground rules for the English church had been laid. It only remained to enforce them and it was in the Queen's vigilance or, rather, non-vigilance that her pragmatic genius is best seen. She had witnessed first hand the failure of her half sister's religious policy. The Marian persecution had sent close on 300 people to the stake and driven many more into the arms of radical continental reformers. From across the Channel where religious war was being waged came appalling stories of massacre, rebellion and fanatical autos da fé. All proved one thing: cuius regio eius religio was not a principle that could be established by force. The majority of Elizabeth's subjects were prepared to conform to the queen's religion. But there were significant minorities who would not conform and could not be coerced. Catholic recusants believed the religion of the Pope was the religion of the people. Radical evangelicals placed the Bible on the throne and were heading toward a Protestant fragmentation that would lead to the solution that freedom of worship was a vital ingredient of national stability. How much of this Elizabeth understood it is impossible to say, but her instinct was to not, as she said, "open windows into men's souls." Bishops and priests who could not travel her religious road were, for the most part, allowed to retire into the anonymity of private life. Non-attendance at church by Catholic recusants and Protestant separatists were punished by fines but not imposed with determined rigour. There were religious tumults in the years ahead, but they were usually precipitated by restless spirits who wanted to impose 'settlement' of their own devising. There must have been times when Elizabeth pondered the words of the medieval poet John Lydgate: "You can please some of the people all of the time, you can please all of the people some of the time, but you cannot please all of the people all of the time."

STEP INSIDE THE ROYAL COURT OF THE UNEXPECTED TUDOR KING

The second-born son of an upstart monarch, Henry VIII was never meant to be king – so how exactly did this prince in the shadows rise up to become England's most notorious ruler?

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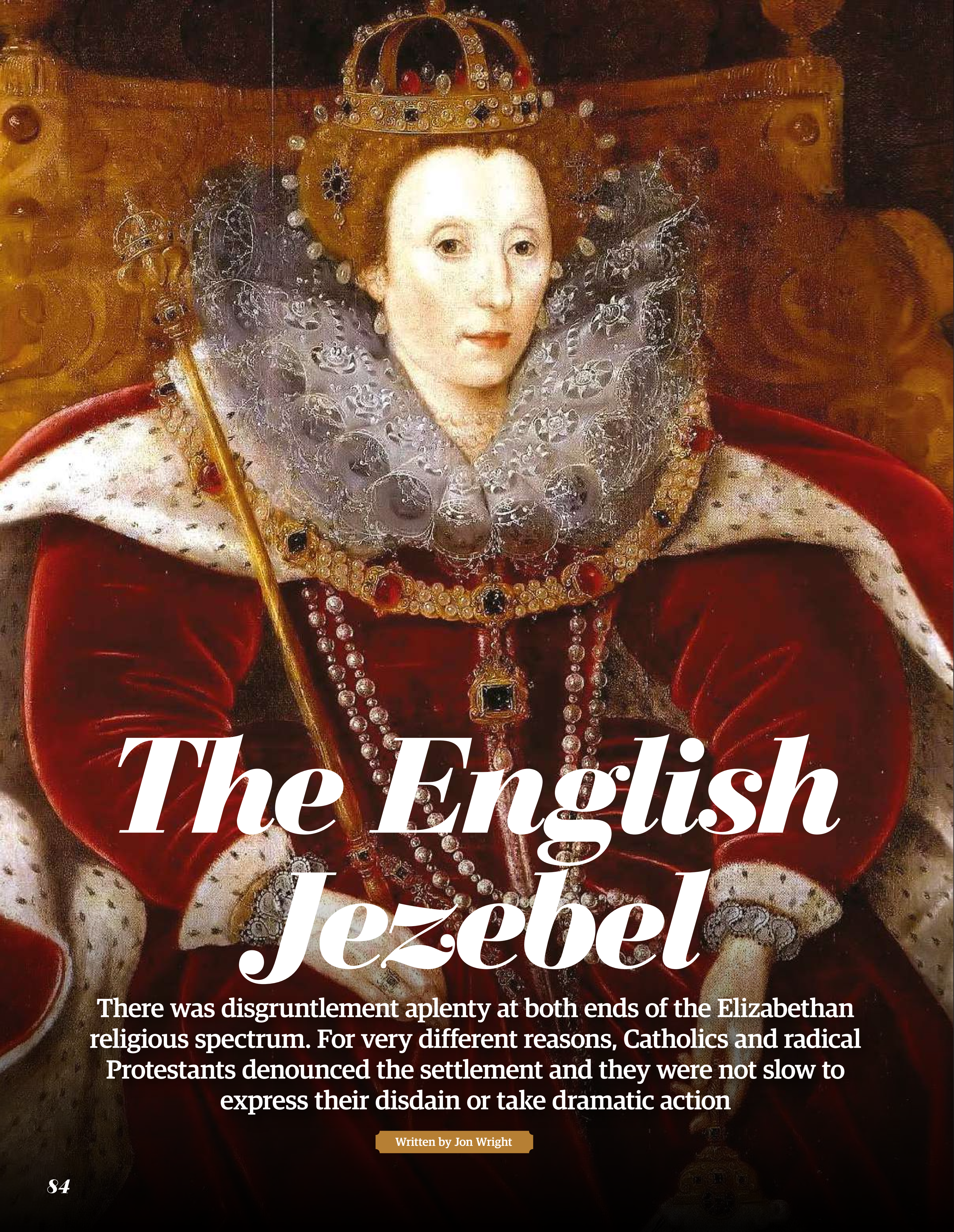


The English Jezebel

There was disgruntlement aplenty at both ends of the Elizabethan religious spectrum. For very different reasons, Catholics and radical Protestants denounced the settlement and they were not slow to express their disdain or take dramatic action

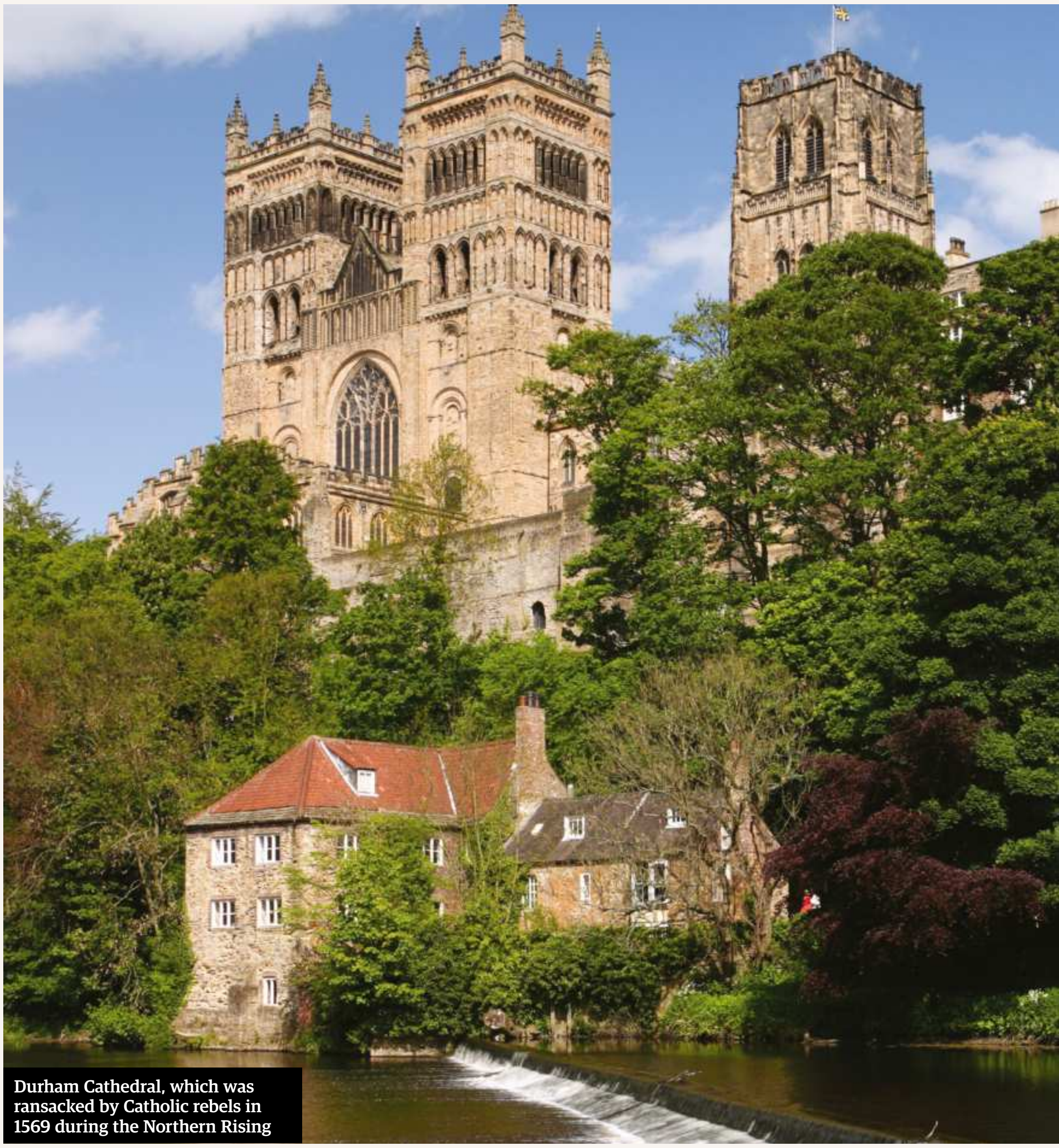
Written by Jon Wright

From the outset, the Elizabethan Church confronted a prickly dilemma: it was far too Protestant for some, and not nearly Protestant enough for others. Roman Catholics had witnessed a period of vibrant revival under Mary Tudor and, had that queen lived and produced an heir, there is every chance that England would have remained loyal to Rome in perpetuity. The arrival of Elizabeth changed all that and, throughout her reign, Catholics would have to choose between obeying the law and tending to their consciences. Their leaders and theologians made it abundantly clear that participating in Protestant services was a catastrophic choice which placed their eternal souls in jeopardy. As the priest Ralph Buckland put it, "you err if you think their prayers to be prayers… it is in my ears the howling of wolves, the bellowing of bulls, the screeching of owls, the mutual answerings of night ravens in the desert." Protestants and their devotions were best avoided because "poison lieth in their company as in domestical adders."

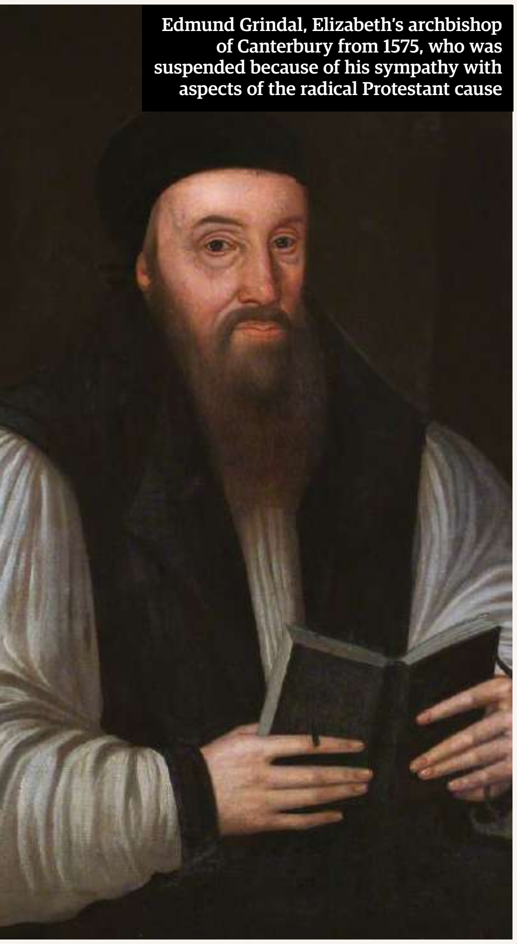
Recusancy, the refusal to attend church, was deemed the only reputable option and, during the first part of the reign, the price for such disobedience was relatively modest: a shilling per week. Moreover, enforcement of anti-recusancy legislation (at this stage in the hands of local officials) was sporadic and, in many parts of the realm (such as Lancashire, Derbyshire and areas of Yorkshire), the Catholic community avoided any severe harassment. Catholic priest Nicholas Sander, who lived through the era, felt able to declare that "for the first ten years of her majesty's reign, the state of Catholics in England was tolerable and, after a sort, in some quietness." The nation's religious landscape, and quite how the contest between the faiths would unfold, was certainly bewildering. In 1567, the Earl of Sussex admitted to confusion over "the question of religion… because although he was a native-born Englishman and knew as well as others what was passing in the country, he was at a loss to state what the religion was that really was observed here." For better or worse, matters would soon be clarified.

A series of events served to harden attitudes, both on the part of the regime as well as among members of the Catholic community. In 1569, a rebellion, masterminded by the earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, engulfed northern England. The uprising was closely related to dreams of placing Mary, Queen of Scots on the throne and it had a conspicuously religious complexion. The rebels marched under the banner of the five wounds of Christ and, at Durham Cathedral, Protestant furnishings were smashed and Catholic masses were celebrated. At Terrington in Yorkshire, the parson's wife hid in a cellar and overheard the rebel Christopher Jackson hold forth on the evils of a married clergy: he sought "a vengeance upon" all Protestant ministers "and the errant whores their wives." At Bishop Auckland, William Cooke gleefully tore up Protestant books with his hands and his teeth.

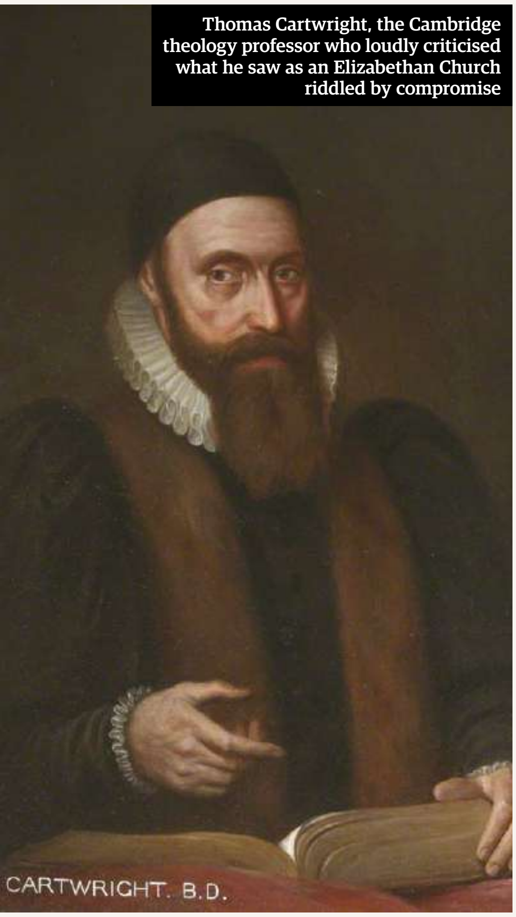
In the following year, the papacy issued a bull, Regnans in excelsis, which formally excommunicated Elizabeth I and informed her subjects that they owed her no obedience. In 1571, another dangerous conspiracy, the Ridolfi plot, reminded the regime of the threat posed by Catholic allegiance to Mary, Queen of Scots. Elizabeth's government began to view the English Catholic community with spiralling suspicion and this perception was only strengthened when, from 1574, priests trained at seminaries on the continent began to tiptoe into England. These missionaries preached the message of non-conformity with gusto and they were zealously pursued by the authorities. In 1577, the first of them would die:


Durham Cathedral, which was ransacked by Catholic rebels in 1569 during the Northern Rising

> "At Bishop Auckland, William Cooke gleefully tore up Protestant books with his hands and his teeth"



Edmund Grindal, Elizabeth's archbishop of Canterbury from 1575, who was suspended because of his sympathy with aspects of the radical Protestant cause



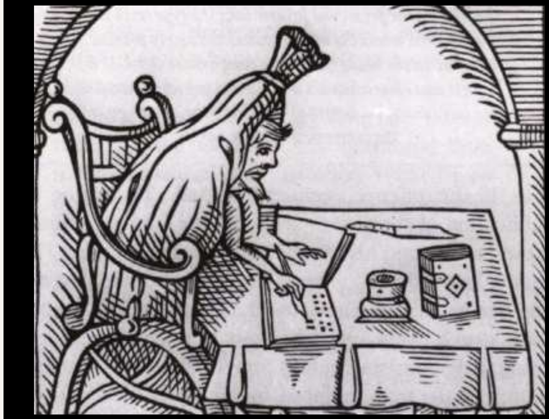
Thomas Cartwright, the Cambridge theology professor who loudly criticised what he saw as an Elizabethan Church riddled by compromise

CARTWRIGHT. B.D.

The Marprelate tracts

In the late 1580s Puritans and their enemies joined battle in one of the Tudor era's fiercest literary controversies

By the mid-1580s radical Protestants had abandoned hope of effecting change through parliamentary protests and they turned, with renewed energy, to the presses. Between October 1588 and September 1589, seven lively pamphlets, written under the pseudonym of Martin Marprelate, hit the shelves. They were immensely popular, not least because of their caustic, scurrilous tone. The tracts, which criticised many aspects of the Elizabethan religious settlement, particularly the episcopate, appalled the establishment. Thomas Cooper, bishop of Winchester, complained that "the like has never [been] committed to press or paper, no not against the vilest sort of men that have lived upon the earth." At first, the authorities attempted to rebut the pamphlets with earnest theological volumes but soon realised that it was wise to fight like with like. Witty texts, with appealing names like *An Almond for a Parrot* began to emerge. The Marprelate texts had been produced at secret locations across the country and, less than a year after their launch, the press had been seized. The identities of the authors on both sides of the controversy has been much debated. The prolific pamphleteer Job Throckmorton, with the help of the Welsh preacher John Penry (who would be executed in 1593), was likely the man behind Marprelate. Authors as estimable as Thomas Nashe and Robert Greene may well have played a role in the regime's literary backlash.



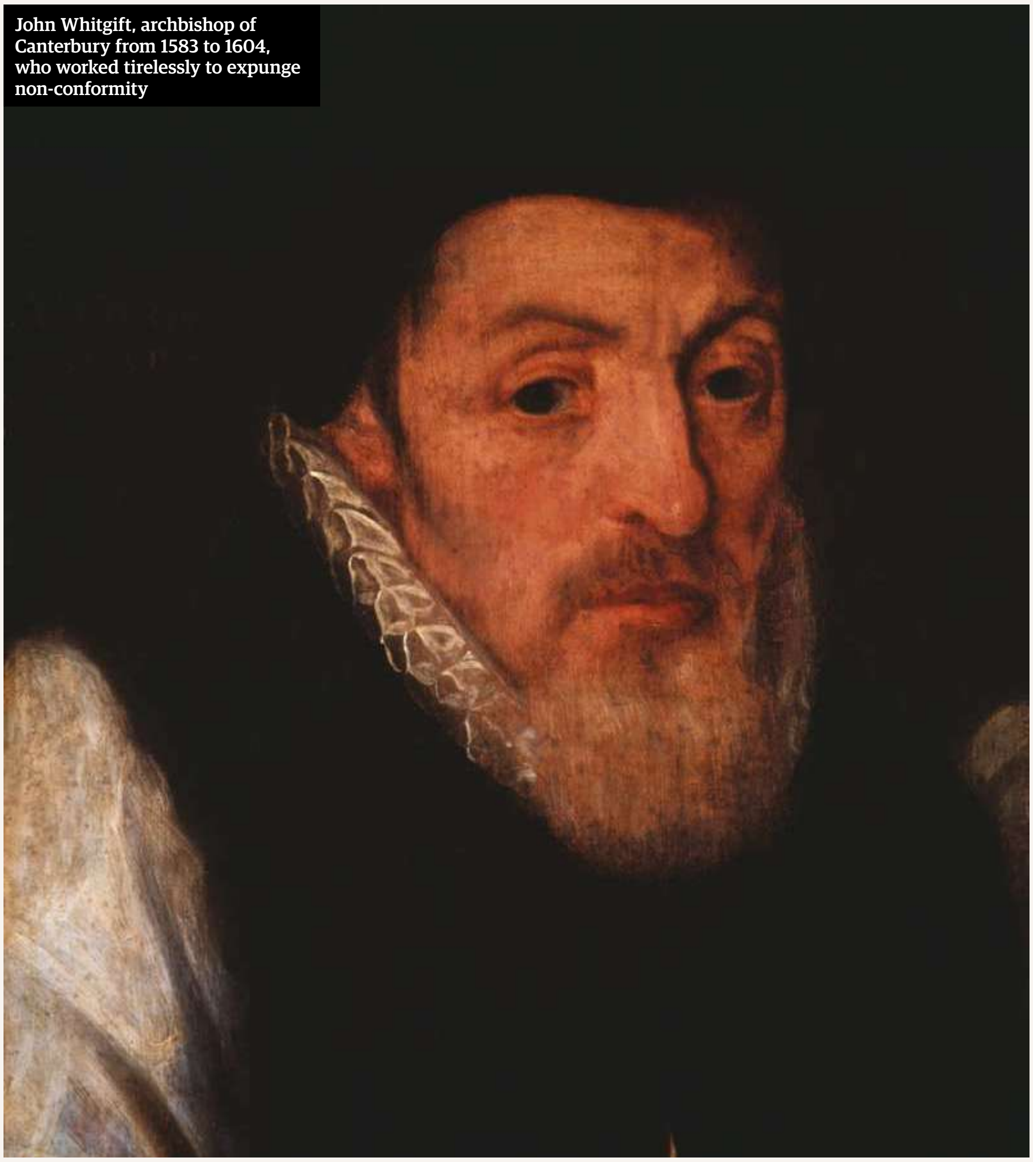
Robert Greene, the great Elizabethan satirist, whose name, among many other contenders, has been linked to the government's campaign against the Marprelate tracts

Cuthbert Mayne, a native of Devon. He spent three months in a filthy dungeon and flatly refused to recant his beliefs or pledge fealty to Elizabeth. "The queen," he announced, "neither ever was, nor is, nor ever shall be the head of the Church of England." On November 30 he was hung, drawn and quartered at the market place in Launceston, Cornwall: his head was placed on the gates of the local castle and his body parts were distributed for display in nearby towns.

Before the end of Elizabeth's reign, more than 120 other priests would meet similar fates, including members of the Jesuit order who began to arrive in England from 1580. Their deaths were, no doubt, a source of admiration and inspiration for the Catholic laity - onlookers would sometimes scramble for items associated with the men and treat them as holy relics - but they also signalled the arrival of a period in which recusancy and other forms of resistance became a much more perilous undertaking. This sea-change was reflected in the statute book. In 1581 recusancy fines soared to a potentially ruinous £20 per month and conversion to Catholicism (or the act of converting others) became a treasonous offence. In 1585 the death penalty was prescribed for anyone who helped or harboured a priest and, by 1593, Catholic recusants were being forbidden from travelling more than five miles beyond their homes without a special licence.

Some Catholics were driven toward greater disobedience by such measures. After all, the perils of attending Protestant services had not evaporated. Dramatic tales were told of those who temporarily lapsed into conformity. One reluctant visitor to his parish church reported that, as soon as the Protestant service began, "my bowels began to torture me. A fire seemed to kindle in them… The flame rose right into my chest and the region of my heart, so that I seemed to be steaming and broiling in some hellish furnace." The man apparently saw the service through to the end but then, with "a searing thirst, he entered the first tavern he saw and ordered a drink to be bought." We are asked to believe that "he emptied the dregs of so many mugs, one on top of the other, that he put down eight gallons in all. And he felt no discomfort or nausea." An impressive, if entirely fanciful, example of drowning the sorrows of conscience, but the point of the story was hard to miss.

Others never came close to succumbing to the regime's demands. Margaret Clitherow, the wife of a York butcher, stayed well away from Protestant churches, gave succour to priests, and allowed Catholic sacraments to be celebrated in her home. She spent three spells in the prison at York Castle between 1577 and 1584 and then, in 1586, her home was raided and Catholic paraphernalia and



John Whitgift, archbishop of Canterbury from 1583 to 1604, who worked tirelessly to expunge non-conformity

> "Clitherow was killed in the cruellest of ways at the toll booth on Ouse Bridge: crushed to death under heavy weights"

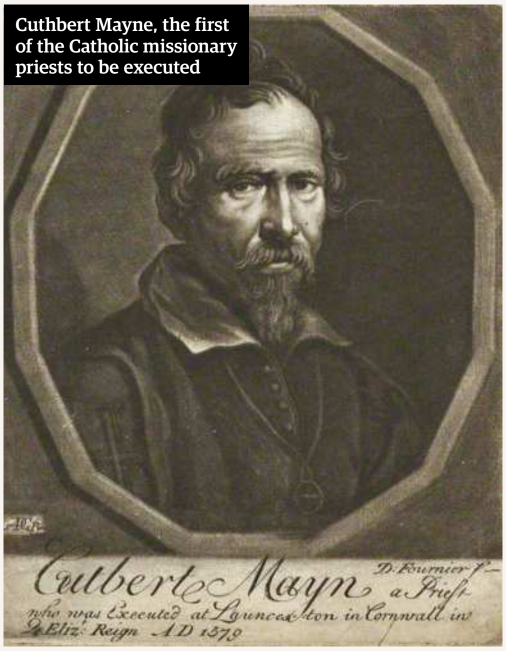
a hiding place for priests were discovered. In short measure Clitherow was killed in the cruellest of ways at the toll booth on Ouse Bridge: crushed to death under heavy weights. She was one of 60 Catholic lay people to be executed for their beliefs during the reign.

Such acts of resistance were not for everyone, and some members of the English Catholic community developed a rare talent for compromise and partial conformity. Contemporaries deployed the term "church papist" to describe such individuals, and a wide range of strategies were available to them. Perhaps you could attend only part of the service in your local church. In 1561, for example, William Black of Kent managed to bite his tongue until unsavoury words were uttered from the pulpit, at which point he felt obliged to leave because, as he explained, "he cannot abide the doctrine and thought his heart would have burst." Dodging the most offensive parts of the service was another popular tactic. This usually meant the Eucharist, and a Mr Tunstall of Chester, described by the authorities as "an old popish priest supposed to be a seducer of the people from true religion," had consented to "go to the church to hear divine service" and behave "dutifully in all things, the communion excepted." The wife of Christopher Haynes of York was rather more subtle. Though she later turned to outright recusancy, in 1598 she was accused of seeming to take communion but then "trying to make away with the sacramental bread in her hand." Many others, discovering Tudor churches were more pet-friendly than our own, fed the wafer to their dogs. Finding some way to avoid the pollution of Protestant doctrine also appealed to some church papists. William Bolton of Heddon, Northumberland, surreptitiously prayed on a Latin primer while the Protestant service was underway. Others stuffed wool into their ears, while the schoolmaster Thomas White of County Durham simply sat "far out of the hearing of service, reading on Latin and popish books." All such gestures were roundly condemned by the syndics of theological correctness but, given the deadly high stakes, both literal and figurative, they might strike us as entirely understandable.

Many paths were open to Elizabethan Catholics, but members of the community shared one, stark reality. By the end of the reign their numbers had been greatly reduced and their alleged status as a mistrusted minority had become firmly entrenched. As one Catholic theologian tried to insist, recusancy was not grounded "upon disloyalty or stubborn obstinacy, as their adversaries give it out, but upon conscience and great reason, and for the avoiding of manifest peril of eternal damnation." The Elizabethan government saw things very differently, arguing that it was not persecuting Catholics for their beliefs, but punishing them for their disloyalty and the threat they posed to social order. In any event, an era of insult had begun and, as the Jesuit Robert Persons grumbled, it was a shame that a Catholic was now likely to be referred to as a "traitorous papist, shameless beast of blockish wit, impudent ass... barking dog, and most impudent yelping cur... proud hypocrite [or] brainless babbling sycophant." The name-calling, of course, was not the worst of it.

At the opposite end of the religious spectrum, those of radical Protestant leanings had their own objections to the trajectory taken by the Elizabethan Church. Though derived, in many ways, from the liturgical changes enacted during the reign of Edward VI, the Elizabethan settlement sustained various ceremonial aspects and doctrinal concepts that were construed by some as "dregs of popery" and the "trappings of Antichrist." Clerical vestments, for instance, became a sore point during the mid-1560s and dozens of London ministers, who regarded the required clothing as "garments dedicated to idolatry," were suspended. The Book of Common Prayer was similarly denounced as "a popish dunghill" which shored up reprehensible ceremonies and claimed that all could be saved: what did this mean for the Calvinistic concept of predestination that divided humanity into the heaven-bound godly Elect and the irrevocably damned? Using the sign of the cross during the

Cuthbert Mayne, the first of the Catholic missionary priests to be executed

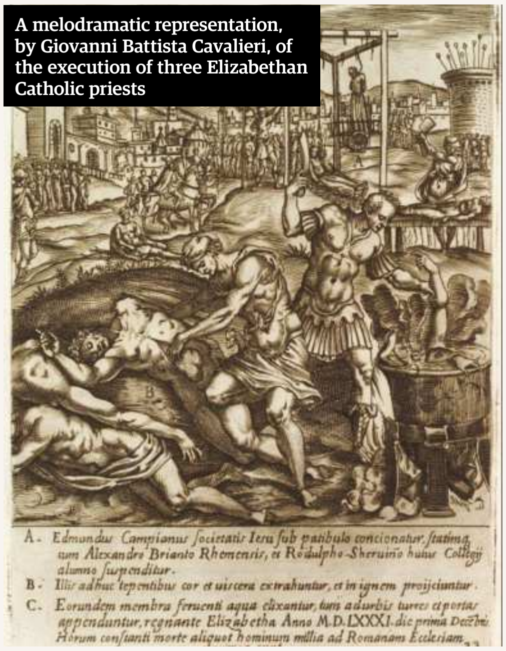

Cutbert Mayn
D. Fournier f.
a Prieſt
who was Executed at Launceston in Cornwall in
Q. Eliz. Reign A D 1579

ceremony of baptism, bowing at the name of Jesus, and even the use of rings in marriage, all reminded the more radically minded of a Catholic past that had supposedly been abandoned. Why, into the bargain, had so many saints' days been allowed back into the liturgical calendar?

Again, during the first decade of Elizabeth's reign, tensions only rarely boiled over and hopes of more thoroughgoing religious change were sustained. By 1570, however, patience was wearing thin in some circles. Thomas Cartwright, professor of theology at Cambridge, voiced his dissent and was expelled for his troubles. In the corridors of political power, calls for change gathered pace, culminating in the Admonition to Parliament of 1572, penned by John Field and Thomas Wilcox, which demanded a revised prayer book and decried the "tyrannous lordship" of bishops.

Just as with the mounting disenchantment of Catholics, the Elizabethan regime became increasingly irked by its more militant Protestant critics. A flashpoint arrived in 1576 over the issue of the so-called "prophesyings." These meetings involved progressive clergy discussing sensitive theological – and sometimes political – questions in front of lay audiences. Elizabeth was determined to stamp out such disruptive, unregulated behaviour and in the summer of 1576 she ordered her archbishop of Canterbury, Edmund Grindal, to leap into action. Grindal, who had his own radical proclivities, refused. It was better, he told the Queen, "to offend your earthly majesty than to offend against the heavenly majesty of God." Grindal was suspended for such insolence, never to be restored, and the divisions at the heart of England's Protestant establishment had been laid bare for all to see.

A melodramatic representation, by Giovanni Battista Cavalieri, of the execution of three Elizabethan Catholic priests


A. Edmundus Campianus ſocietatis Ieſu ſub patibulo concionatur, ſtatimq. cum Alexandro Brianto Rhemenſis, et Rodulpho Sheruino huius Collegij alumno ſuſpenditur.
B. Illis adhuc tepentibus cor et uiscera extrahuntur, et in ignem proijciuntur.
C. Eorundem membra ferventi aqua elixantur, tum adurbis turres et portas appenduntur, regnante Elizabetha Anno M.D.LXXXI. die prima Decēbris
Horum constanti morte aliquot hominum millia ad Romanam Ecclesiam

Over the next two decades, many variants of radical Protestantism gathered steam. The cause of Presbyterianism, which sought to do away with bishops and vest authority in semi-autonomous local congregations, won many adherents. More parliamentary campaigns and protests emerged and scurrilous pamphlet campaigns, such as the Marprelate tracts of 1588/9, were launched. Outright separatists also added to the non-conformist muddle. There had been instances of such assemblies before – in London during the 1560s and at Norwich, under the leadership of Robert Browne, in the early 1580 – and new groups, such as the short-lived congregation established by Henry Barrow and John Greenwood in early-1590s Southwark, became ever more assertive.

For the most part, such initiatives were contained or snuffed out. Barrow and Greenwood, for example, would be hanged within a year of setting up their separatist congregation, and John Whitgift, archbishop of Canterbury from 1583, was particularly zealous in his efforts to undermine all species of non-conformity: demanding, for instance, that every clergyman should accept the Thirty Nine Articles in their entirety and acknowledge the Book of Common Prayer contained nothing contrary to the word of God. In 1586, new rules demanded that any religious book or pamphlet must receive prior episcopal approval ahead of publication. For all these efforts, however, seeds of dissent and disobedience had been planted, and they would come to full fruition during the 17th century.

Not that open dissent was the only option available to disillusioned Protestants. One of the most fascinating groups to emerge in Elizabethan England was the Familists, or Family of Love. Founded in 1540, in Holland, by Hendrik Niclaes, this idiosyncratic movement, with a pronounced mystical bent, espoused an inner religious life, looked askance at traditional ecclesiastical structures, and offered novel interpretations of scripture. Their ideas began to infiltrate England during the 1570s, largely thanks to the efforts of the London-based Dutch merchant Christopher Vitells. A sizeable presence was established in the capital and surrounding areas, as well as Cambridgeshire, and it posed unique problems for the Elizabethan authorities. Everyone knew the Familists were making their mark: indeed, more hostile works were published about them than about any other English Protestant sect during the last three decades of the 16th century and the Familists routinely cropped up in the discussions of the Privy Council. The drawback was that the Familists were almost obsessively secretive – a group in Guildford only met at night, and deployed passwords to deter imposters – while avoiding debate with anyone outside their ranks. They also, unlike non-conformist Puritans and Catholics, quite happily attended the services of the established church in order to avoid detection. As a royal proclamation announced in 1580, they "secretly in corners make privy assemblies of divers simple, unlearned people." In a way, they were perceived as an even greater menace than open dissenters: at least you knew where you stood with a recusant.

On balance, the Elizabethan Church made a decent fist of containing the many and varied threats to its unity and, lest we forget, many people in England, of all devotional sympathies, sought to live quiet lives in noisy times. Any image of a nation constantly in turmoil, with endless doctrinal bickering in every corner of the land, would be

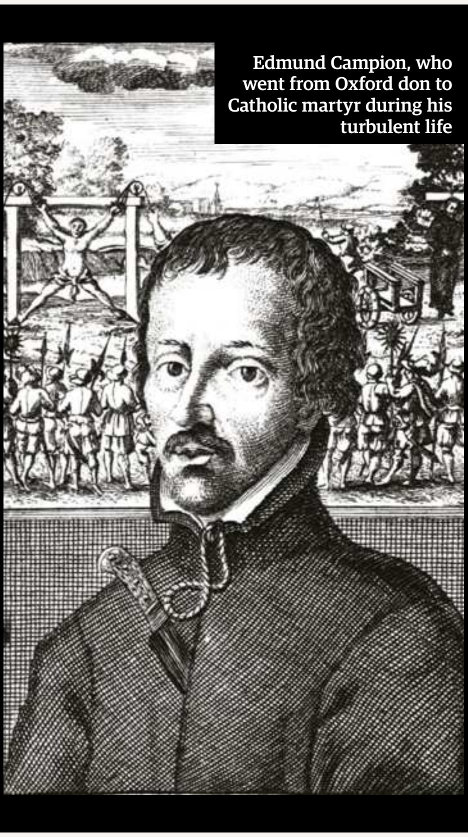
The house in the Shambles, York, once occupied by the Catholic martyr Margaret Clitherow

The SHRINE of The Saint MARGARET CLITHEROW

Edmund Campion

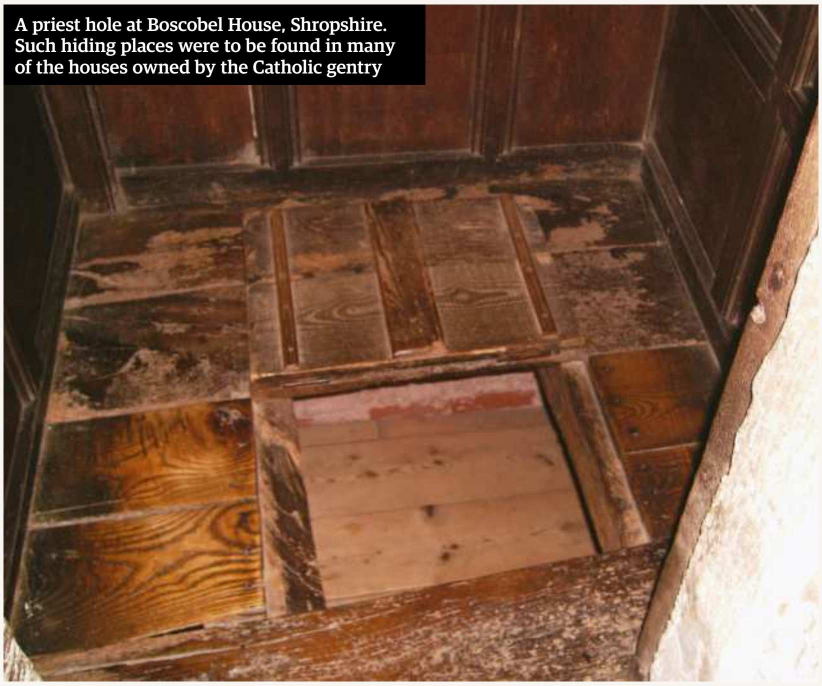
The most famous Catholic martyr of the Elizabethan era challenged his Protestant adversaries to public debate and toured the country to bolster the spirits of the recusant community

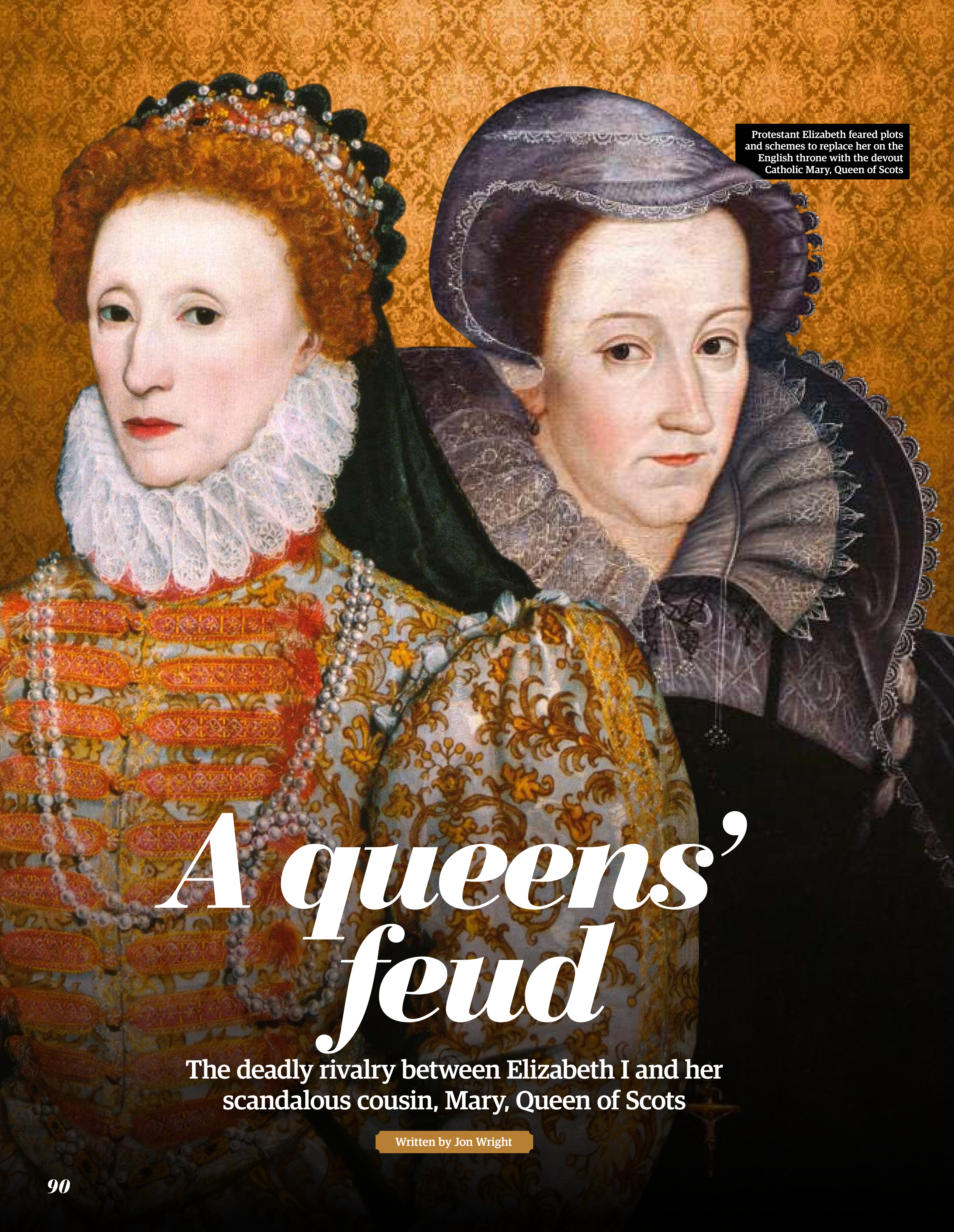
During the early years of Elizabeth's reign, Edmund Campion was beginning a promising career at Oxford University. As he climbed the rungs of the academic ladder he was obliged to take oaths, including one that acknowledged the queen as the supreme governor of the English Church. Pangs of conscience convinced Campion to abandon academia and, after a spell in Ireland, he headed to the seminary at Douai and then, in 1573, to Rome where he joined the Jesuit order. In 1580, along with Robert Persons, he inaugurated the Jesuit mission to England: he arrived disguised as a travelling jewellery salesman. Campion was provocative from the outset, openly challenging Protestant leaders and theologians to public debate. He then embarked upon tours intended to bolster the morale of the recusant community: first in Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Berkshire, then further north in Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Lancashire. A frantic manhunt was launched and Campion was arrested in July 1581. Harsh imprisonment, interrogation and torture (including the notorious rack) ensued and Campion was charged, despite scant evidence, with treasonable conspiracy. Campion performed well at his trial but a guilty verdict came in, and on 1 December 1581 he was executed at Tyburn. His courageous death proved to be a source of great inspiration for the Catholic community and, owing to the cruel way he had been treated, a propagandist windfall for the critics of the Elizabethan regime.


Edmund Campion, who went from Oxford don to Catholic martyr during his turbulent life

an exaggeration. For all that, the enmities were all too real and Elizabeth I left behind an unenviable legacy for her successors. More often than not, when English critics of the realm's religious settlement launched their invectives in print they avoided personal attacks on the queen: they positioned themselves as loyal subjects, desperate to set Elizabeth on a more virtuous track. Words spoken in private were a different matter, and polemical works smuggled into England from the continent often descended to staggering levels of vitriol. This, after all, was an era during which an English monarch was regularly compared to Jezebel, the biblical queen of tyrannical tendencies who persecuted prophets, was thrown from a window, and had her corpse eaten by dogs.

The wounds ran deep and the sense of befuddlement that had held sway at the beginning of the reign still afflicted many people in 1603. It is tempting to express a measure of sympathy for a fictional character in one late-Elizabethan text: "O Lord what shall I say?," he asks, "or upon what religion shall I now stay me, whereby I might now find out the truth… Lord have mercy on us, what shall we say that are unlearned in this troublesome time of so many religions and opinions, or whom shall we believe?"


A priest hole at Boscobel House, Shropshire. Such hiding places were to be found in many of the houses owned by the Catholic gentry



Protestant Elizabeth feared plots and schemes to replace her on the English throne with the devout Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots

A queens' feud

The deadly rivalry between Elizabeth I and her scandalous cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots

Written by Jon Wright

In the parliament of 1586, Job Throckmorton, the MP for Warwick, launched a bilious attack on Mary Stuart. She was, he bellowed, "such a creature whom no Christian eye can behold with patience, whose villainy hath stained the earth and infected the air, the breath of whose malice towards the Church of God and the Lord's anointed, our dread sovereign, hath in a loathsome kind of savour fumed up to the heavens." Destroying Mary would be "one of the fairest riddances that ever the Church of God had" and Throckmorton called upon his fellow MPs to "be all joint suitors to her Majesty that Jezebel may live no longer."

He was confident that no one would dare "stain his mouth in defence of [Mary]," and he was right. Mary, Parliament explained, was "hardened in malice against your royal person, notwithstanding that you have done her all favour, mercy and kindness." She was "greedy for your death and preferreth it before her own life," and who could be surprised after so many years striving "to ruin and overthrow the happy state and common weal of this most noble realm"?

The question we must ask is this: how had matters reached so intense a pitch that a queen was being asked to spill the royal blood of her cousin? Therein lies one of the the most poignant and befuddling Tudor tales.

The relationship between Mary Stuart and Elizabeth Tudor was always destined to be turbulent, and the royal succession carries most of the blame. At the outset of her reign, another Tudor parliament had petitioned Elizabeth to marry at her earliest convenience, a demand that she brushed off and declared that, for now at least, she would remain "in this kind of life in which I yet live." If marriage became a possibility, she would choose a candidate who had England's best interests at heart, but "In the end, this shall be for me sufficient: that a marble stone shall declare that a queen having lived such a time, lived and died a virgin."

In 1559, almost everyone seemed to have assumed that this was a rhetorical flourish rather than a declaration of dynastic intent, but Elizabeth's failure to find a husband and produce the all-important heir became increasingly irksome. In fairness, any match would have been problematic. A foreign husband raised the spectre of unwelcome overseas interference in English affairs, and the realm had seen enough of that during the marriage of Mary Tudor and Philip II of Spain. It was also difficult to envision any home-grown husband of adequate stature or whose selection would not stir up rivalries within the English nobility.

For all that, many people opined that some solution would have been better than none and, as early as 1562, Bishop John Jewel of Salisbury captured the prevailing mood: "Oh how wretched are we who cannot tell under what sovereign we are to live." Marriage was not the only way to ease the nation's concerns, of course. A successor could be named and, back in the 1559 parliament, Elizabeth had promised to do precisely that "in convenient time". The only trouble was that the obvious candidate, Mary, Queen of Scots, was deeply controversial. Mary's claim was pristine. She was the daughter of James V of Scotland, the son of Henry VIII's sister, Margaret Tudor. Elizabeth's grandfather and Mary's great-grandfather were one and the same person: Henry VII. In simpler times, naming Mary as a successor would have been a relatively straightforward matter.

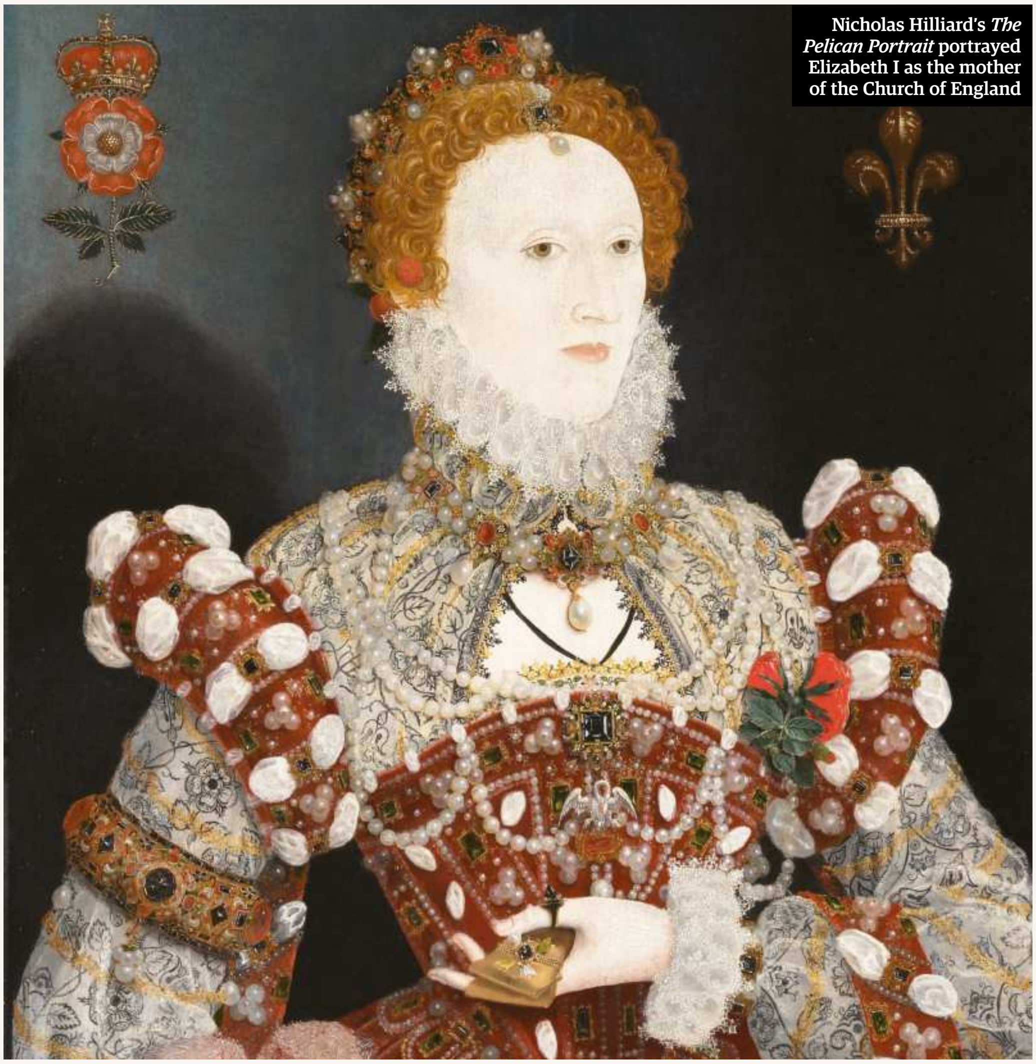
Mary had been born on 8 December 1542 and within just a few days, following the death of her father, she ascended the Scottish throne. In July 1543, one of the clauses of the Treaty of Greenwich mandated the betrothal of Mary and Henry VIII's son, Edward. However, the Scots quickly reneged and another Anglo-Scottish war ensued. Mary's marital future took an alternative course and, in July 1548, the Scottish parliament agreed to her betrothal to the French dauphin, Francis. Mary headed off to France in August and, after years at the French court, married Francis in April 1558.

Just a few months later in November, Mary Tudor died and many Catholic monarchs across Europe looked askance at the spectacle of Elizabeth, the daughter of the hated Anne Boleyn, ascending the English throne. Surely Mary, Queen of Scots - a woman of unquestionable Catholic sympathies - was a more legitimate monarch than Henry VIII's bastard daughter? In France, at any rate, the English royal arms were applied to Mary and when Henri II died in July 1559, Francis and Mary were able to style themselves the rulers of France, Scotland and England.

Such moves were more about bluster than anything else, but they were provocative and would not quickly be forgotten - like the glaring reality of Mary's Catholicism. This was deeply unpalatable to many in Elizabeth's regime, not least William Cecil, who would dedicate great energies over the coming decades to destroying Mary. It was all too obvious that many Catholic European rulers perceived Mary as not so much a worthy successor should Elizabeth die, but as an ideal replacement. For Philip II of Spain, Mary would always be "the gate by which religion must enter the realm of England."

"The relationship between Mary Stuart and Elizabeth Tudor was always destined to be turbulent"

The ruins of Lochleven Castle, the fortress in Scotland where Mary was held prisoner before her escape to England



Nicholas Hilliard's *The Pelican Portrait* portrayed Elizabeth I as the mother of the Church of England

Needless to say, the notion of naming Mary as Elizabeth's successor was, from the outset, deemed to be perilous, but this did not make it impossible. After her husband's death in December 1560, Mary returned to Scotland and, as well as coping with the pressures of a Protestant regime and a fractious nobility, made her case to the English government. In a letter written in 1566, Mary urged Elizabeth's Privy Council to "move your sovereign to show her own reasonable favour to our advancement in that which is right." She was, of course, referring to the naming of Elizabeth's heir, though she wisely assured the Council that "we be not of mind to press our good sister further than shall come of her own good pleasure."

Mary's supporters were more forthright. John Leslie wrote of the duty of all monarchs to prepare for a smooth transition of power after their deaths. To leave the succession open was to risk "the imminent and almost the inevitable danger of this our noble realm being [overwhelmed] with the raging and roaring waves of mutual discord and to be consumed with the terrible force of civil dissension." Elizabeth needed to look to Mary, whose claim to the throne was "most conformable to the law of God, of nature, and of this realm."

Leslie was entirely correct and, albeit rather belatedly, Mary formally abandoned any ambitions to supplant Elizabeth. Publicly, at least, the succession was all that Mary sought, but Elizabeth made it abundantly clear that she would not name an heir until she had either married or definitively decided not to marry. Mary was disappointed by such hedging, but it is important to stress that her relationship with Elizabeth was defined by polite tension. Matters would become considerably more strained as the events of the later 1560s began to rapidly unfold.

Elizabeth may have been reluctant to marry, but this did not preclude her vigorous interference in Mary's quest for a husband. The prospect of Mary marrying someone such as Don Carlos, the son of Philip II, was abhorrent, so the Elizabethan regime made various suggestions for a more suitable match including, rather oddly, Elizabeth's intimate Robert Dudley. Mary declined such advice and plumped for Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, a man with his own strong claims to the English succession. They married in July 1565 but Darnley proved to be an unmitigated disaster. He became involved in machinations against his wife, was part of the assassination of Mary's confidante David Riccio in March 1566, and by February 1567 he was dead. The house at Kirk o'Field had been deliberately destroyed with gunpowder and Darnley was found strangled in the grounds.

Elizabeth wrote to Mary expressing sorrow for her cousin's troubles but, with a note of censoriousness, pointed to "such things as are produced to prove yourself the cause of all the same." Worse was to follow. Any talk of a love-match between Mary and the man she married next is misguided. The Earl of Bothwell had to deploy unsavoury methods to win Mary's hand, only securing it after abducting the queen in the spring of 1567. Marriage followed in May, but by now large swathes of the Scottish nobility had grown heartily tired of her antics. Armies were raised and, in July, a captive Mary was forced to abdicate in favour of her infant son James. She was held at Lochleven Fortress, but managed to escape and cross the border into England in May 1568. As she wrote to Elizabeth: "I am now forced out of my

The rise & fall of Mary

1542

A queen is born
Mary Stuart is born at Linlithgow Palace in West Lothian. Her father, James V, dies on 14 December and Mary succeeds him. Her coronation takes place on 9 September 1543.
8 December 1542

Betrothement
The treaty of Greenwich between England and Scotland is signed. Mary is to be betrothed to the future Edward VI. However, the Scots renege in December, provoking Anglo-Scottish war.
1 July 1543

Royal consent
The Scottish parliament agrees to Mary's betrothal to Francis, the Dauphin of France. Mary arrives in France nearly a month later on 13 August and begins a 13-year stay in the country.
7 July 1548

The marriage
Mary and Francis marry at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. On 17 November, Mary I of England dies in London and is succeeded by her younger sister, Elizabeth I.
24 April 1558

A young widow
Henri II of France dies in Paris. Francis and Mary become the rulers of France, but Francis dies on 5 December 1560 and Mary loses the crown to Charles XI and his mother, Catherine de' Medici.
10 July 1559

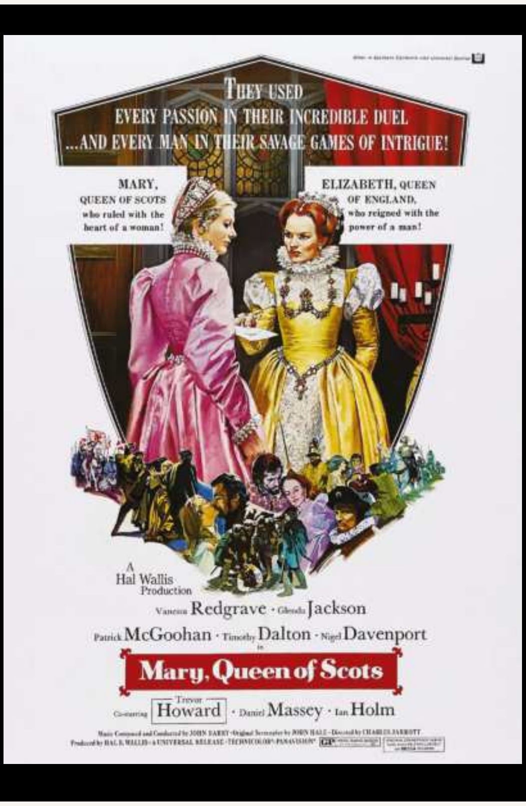
Mary and Elizabeth in culture

How have the queens been portrayed over time?

Portrayals of the relationship between Mary and Elizabeth, in both high art and popular culture, have rarely been overly concerned with historical accuracy. The two women never actually met in person, which is a nuisance for anyone interested in a dramatic storyline, so encounters have routinely been concocted from imagination.

It happens in Schiller's play *Maria Stuart*, and twice in the 1971 film *Mary, Queen of Scots*, starring Glenda Jackson as Elizabeth and Vanessa Redgrave in the title role. Martha Graham's 1985 dance piece *Episodes* saw the two queens strive to resolve their differences over a game of tennis but most of the fictitious meetings have tended towards the more passionate end of the spectrum. In Donizetti's opera *Maria Stuarda*, insults are hurled with abandon and on one occasion this had regrettable results. The singer playing Mary aims harsh words at her rival: "Impure daughter of Anne Boleyn, do you speak of dishonour? Prostitute - unworthy and obscene, I blush for you. The throne of England is sullied by your feet, vile bastard!" During one early rehearsal, these lines were delivered with such gusto that the singer playing Elizabeth took personal offence and the two divas fell to blows.

Caricature is common, with Mary usually being positioned as either an innocent victim or a love-struck political pawn, but only an exceptional historical double-act could have managed to inspire artists as diverse as Robert Schumann, Lou Reed and Liz Lochhead.


THEY USED
EVERY PASSION IN THEIR INCREDIBLE DUEL
...AND EVERY MAN IN THEIR SAVAGE GAMES OF INTRIGUE!
MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS who ruled with the heart of a woman!
ELIZABETH, QUEEN OF ENGLAND, who reigned with the power of a man!
A Hal Wallis Production
Vanessa Redgrave · Glenda Jackson
Patrick McGoohan · Timothy Dalton · Nigel Davenport
in
Mary, Queen of Scots
Co-starring Trevor Howard · Daniel Massey · Ian Holm

kingdom and driven to such straits that, next to God, I have no hope but in your goodness."

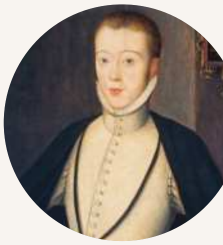
The situation was profoundly awkward for the English queen. Mary had been cast out by her nobles, was widely suspected of being involved in Darnley's mysterious murder, and the risk of her becoming a focus for Catholic disaffection in England was greater than ever. Events in the years immediately following Mary's arrival - the Northern Rebellion of 1569 and the papal excommunication of 1570 - did little to placate Mary's enemies. Thomas Norton found a receptive audience when he described Mary Stuart as someone who had "made shipwreck of all honour and reputation" and whose "own acts publicly known to the world" revealed "of inclination how she is given."

Elizabeth took her duty of care towards a fellow monarch very seriously, however. It was necessary to keep Mary under house arrest, but Elizabeth did not rush to judgement about Mary's past behaviour or future intentions. Commissions of enquiry between October 1569 and January 1570 deployed evidence (now known to have been tampered with and forged) to point towards Mary's role in Darnley's murder, but Elizabeth concluded that nothing had been proven either positively or negatively. But then came the Ridolfi Plot of 1571, a grand scheme involving a planned invasion with Spanish troops, a rising of English Catholics, the removal of Elizabeth and the accession of Mary, married to the Duke of Norfolk, to the throne.

When Parliament assembled in May 1572, there was much talk of Mary's knowledge of the plot, and over the coming months Elizabeth was provided with frank advice about how to deal with someone who had allegedly sought the "destruction of our prince". "We see not," the petitioners explained, "but her majesty must needs offend in conscience before God if she do not punish [Mary] according to the measure of her offence in the highest degree." There was no room for partiality or "slack justice", since Mary had "heaped up all the sins of the licentious sons of David: adulteries, murders, conspiracies, treasons and blasphemies against God." She had "altogether forgotten God and all goodness... seeking and devising by all means possible not only to deprive your majesty of all earthly dignities, but also of your natural life."

> "It was necessary to keep Mary under house arrest, but Elizabeth did not rush to judgement about Mary's past behaviour or future intentions"

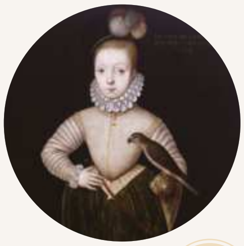
Home once more
Mary returns to Scotland. Following the Treaty of Edinburgh of 6 July 1560, Scotland is ruled by a Protestant regime, but Mary is allowed to worship privately as a Catholic.
19 August 1561

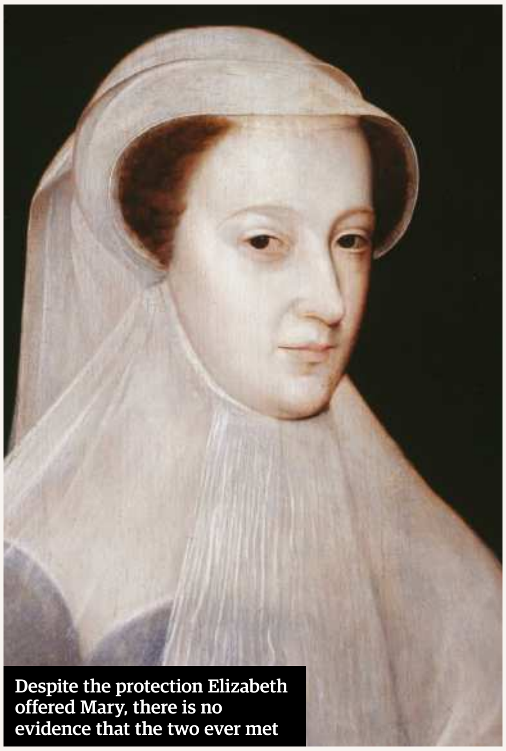


The second husband
Mary makes Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, the Earl of Ross. The couple are married in the chapel of Holyrood Palace, Edinburgh, on 29 July. As a widow, Mary wore a black dress.
15 May 1565

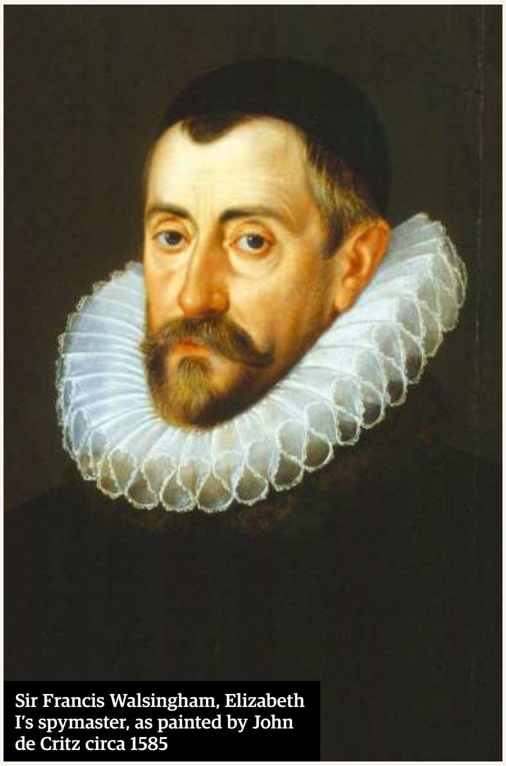
The husband rebels
Mary's confidante David Riccio is murdered as part of a plot against Mary including Darnley. Mary escapes to Dunbar on 11 March, raises an army and returns to power.
9 March 1566

The queen's heir
Mary gives birth to a son, James, the future James VI of Scotland and I of England, at Edinburgh Castle. He is baptised at Stirling Castle on 17 December according to Catholic rites.
19 June 1566





Despite the protection Elizabeth offered Mary, there is no evidence that the two ever met



Sir Francis Walsingham, Elizabeth I's spymaster, as painted by John de Critz circa 1585

"The fact that she was not an English subject was irrelevant and her royal status did not protect her"

Various possible objections to killing Mary were tackled. The fact that she was not an English subject was irrelevant and her royal status did not protect her as "the dignity of the person offending increaseth the offence", and there were many precedents for killing errant rulers. Even the "worthy" Joshua had "put to death at one time five kings… causing soldiers to set their feet on their necks and slay them". Elizabeth was not willing to sacrifice Mary, opting to placate her subjects by allowing the execution of the Duke of Norfolk. The queen appears to have regarded protecting Mary as her public duty, both as a relative and as a fellow monarch - but what of their private relationship? Many letters between the two survive and, while often hemmed in by protocol and politesse, they contain many glimpses of the steady souring of relations through the period of Mary's enforced sojourn in England.

At first, Mary was full of gratitude "for the honourable respect and courteous entertainment that I have received since my arrival," but even at this date there were complaints. Before long she was grumbling about her servants being searched at the borders, believing all manner of rumours about Elizabeth supporting her enemies in Scotland, and announcing, "the state of my affairs constrains me to speak to you this freely." Before the decade was out, Mary was insisting that "I have trusted in you… I have undertaken nothing but what you have advised" and sought "to obey you as a daughter would a mother." She could not understand the "unloving treatment" she had received. Criticism and veiled threats were unlikely to impress Elizabeth, but Mary was undeterred: "This I entreat you, not to compel me to hold different opinion of you than that which till now I have wished to maintain of so near a relative", adding that "I require succour; or else I shall be compelled to seek for it where God shall direct me."

Elizabeth was not the sort of monarch one inflicted an 'or else' clause upon and, as the 1570s unfolded, she grew increasingly irritated by Mary's petulance. The English queen reminded Mary that she had always "discharged the office of a good kinswoman" and was clearly offended by the "heap of confused troubled thoughts" stemming from Mary's pen. It was far wiser, Elizabeth suggested, "to believe and trust rather to me in all your difficulties" rather than "either bruits of the brainless vulgar or the viperous backbiters of the sowers of discord." By February 1572, after receiving a "long letter" from Mary "with multitude of sharp and injurious words," Elizabeth reminded her cousin "That it is not the manner to obtain good things with evil speeches." As the frequency of letters from Elizabeth declined, Mary fell back on tantrums, explaining in January 1574 that she had not written for some while "for fear of importuning you, since my letters have not latterly been thought worthy of a reply from you."

The mutual resentment simmered on, with Mary becoming exasperated by the vanishing possibility of her restoration to the Scottish throne and saddened by the mounting estrangement from her son - and then the plots returned. First came the Throckmorton Conspiracy in 1583, with its dreams of an invasion force led by the Duke of Guise removing Elizabeth from the throne. It is difficult to gauge the level of Mary's knowledge or backing, but some of her chief supporters were clearly involved. Thousands of Elizabeth's subjects were sufficiently alarmed to instigate the Bond of Association in 1584, whereby they swore to prosecute to death any pretender in whose name an assassination attempt against Elizabeth was launched.

In March 1585, Mary signed off a letter to Elizabeth as "your humble and affectionate, but desolate, sister and cousin." The sense of despair is unmistakable. Mary tells of her "misled child" and those who sought "to sever him from me as they have laboured so earnestly since long ago." She writes that she is more than happy to abandon any hope of being the successor and wonders if

The queen: a killer?
An explosion by gunpowder destroys the house at Kirk o'Field, near Edinburgh. Darnley's body is found in a nearby orchard, strangled but somehow unharmed by the explosion.
10 February 1567

The third husband
Leading nobles lend support to the idea of the Earl of Bothwell marrying Mary. After Mary refuses, Bothwell abducts her and she agrees to the marriage, returning to Edinburgh on 6 May.
20 April 1567

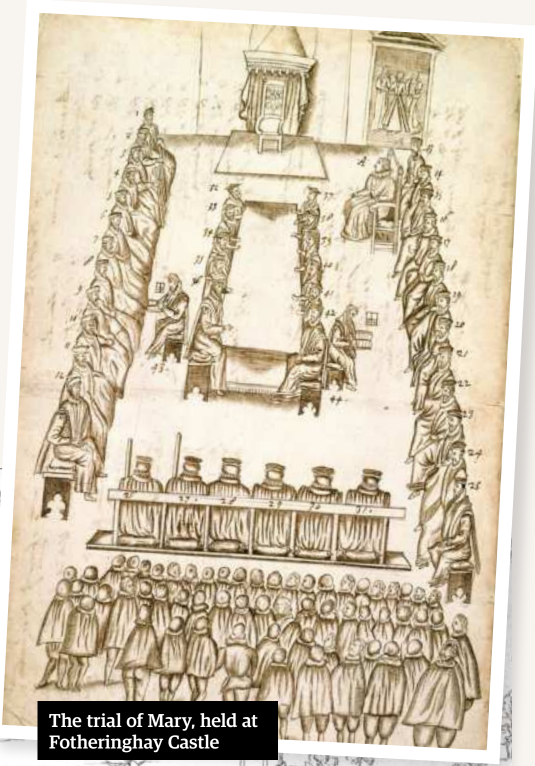
A captured queen
Mary and Bothwell marry at Holyroodhouse and disgruntled nobles soon begin to raise armies. On 15 June, Mary surrenders and is confined at Lochleven Fortress.
15 May 1567

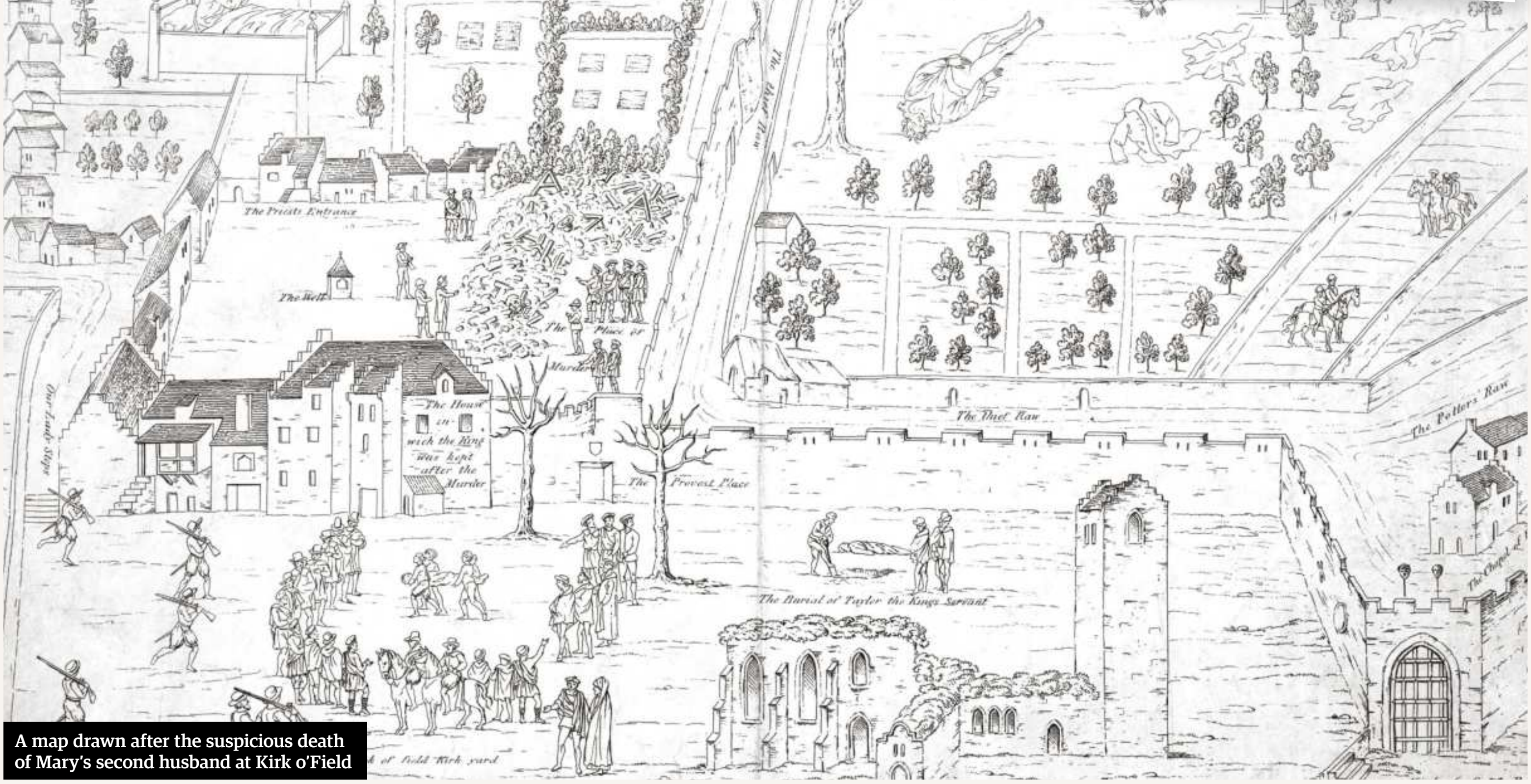
The heir takes over
Mary is forced to abdicate under threats that she will be killed if she does not comply. Her son James becomes King James VI of Scotland and is crowned on 29 July.
24 July 1567

she might be allowed to travel "out of this isle into some solitary place."

Mary's enemies had no intention of allowing such dreams to be fulfilled and, with the Babington Plot of 1586, they found their opportunity to strike. This latest conspiracy was real enough, with the familiar goals of killing Elizabeth and replacing her with Mary, but when the government caught wind of the plans they did not move to shut them down. Rather, they infiltrated the plotters' ranks and allowed lines of communication to be opened up with Mary. Letters to and from Mary were hidden in beer barrels delivered to Chartley House, but they would be copied, deciphered when necessary and sent on to the mastermind of Elizabethan intelligence, Francis Walsingham. When Anthony Babington wrote to Mary on 6 July informing her of his plans, Walsingham knew all about it. When Mary replied on 17 July, Walsingham was delighted. Mary had written of her awareness of "the affair being thus prepared" and showed no resistance to the "accomplishing of their design".

Mary was tried and found guilty at a commission just months later in October. In its wake, Parliament met. It was time, as one speaker succinctly put it, to "take away this most wicked and filthy woman


The trial of Mary, held at Fotheringhay Castle


Iudge and revenge my cause o lord
The Black Fryers
The Priests Entrance
The Well
The Place of Murder
The House in which the King was kept after the Murder
Our Ladie Steps
The Provost Place
The Thief Raw
The Burial of Taylor the Kings Servant
The Potters Raw
The Chapel
of field Kirk yard
A map drawn after the suspicious death of Mary's second husband at Kirk o'Field

Escaping Scotland
Mary escapes from Lochleven and, after abortive military efforts, crosses the border into England on 16 May. She spends the remainder of her life under house arrest.
2 May 1568

Innocent or guilty?
Conferences are held at York and Westminster to assess Mary's possible role in the murder of Darnley. Elizabeth declares that neither Mary's guilt nor innocence has been proven.
October 1568-January 1569

More uprisings
The Northern Rising led by the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland takes place. While Mary has no direct involvement in the plot she is moved further south.
November 1569

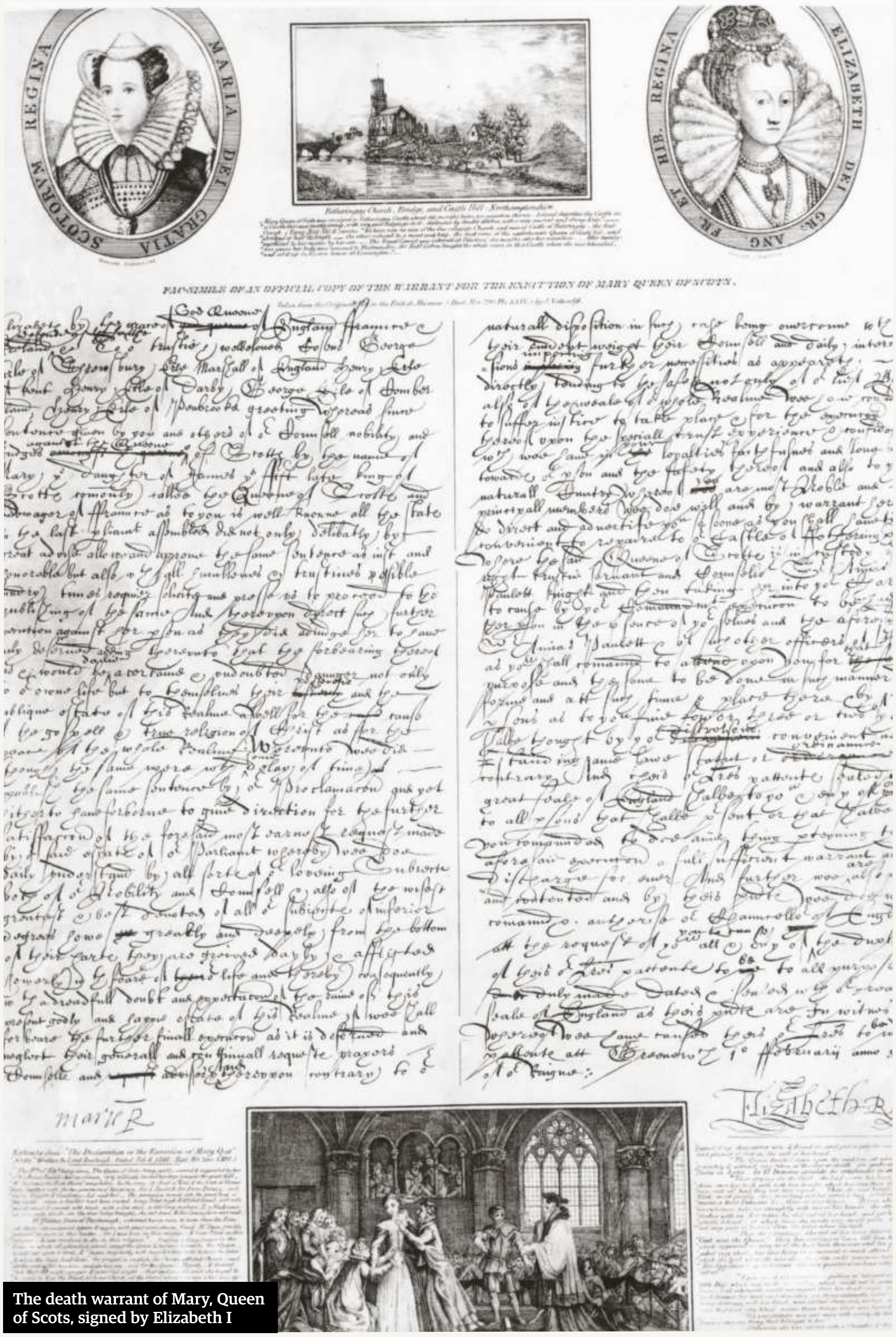
A plot is uncovered
The so-called Ridolfi Plot aims to provoke rebellion among English Catholics with a Spanish invasion and Mary on the throne after a marriage to the Duke of Norfolk.
March 1571

with justice." Petitions were again raised to execute Mary, and Elizabeth's objections were confronted head on. The Scottish queen was "only a cousin to you in a remote degree, but we be sons and children of this land whereof you be not only the natural mother, but also the wedded spouse."

If Queen Elizabeth refused to act, there would be dreadful consequences: "In sparing her, your majesty shall not only give courage and hardiness to the enemies of God, of your majesty, and of your kingdom, but shall discomfort and daunt with despair the hearts of your loving people and deservedly provoke the heavy hand and wrath of God."

Once more, however, Elizabeth prevaricated. In a speech on 24 November, in direct response to the petitions, she explained that, "I have strived more this day than ever in my life whether I should speak or use silence." At this stage, she could only provide what she described as an "answer answerless" to the question of what she would or would not do to Mary. Perhaps this was heartfelt confusion, or maybe a way of advertising the queen's instincts for clemency ahead of making the decision, but few doubted how it was going to end. By 4 December, the death warrant had been drawn up. In the same month, Mary wrote to Elizabeth with resignation: "You will credit or disbelieve my discourse as it seems best to you." She was "resolved to strengthen myself in Christ Jesus alone" who had already carried her through so many "unjust calumnies, accusations and condemnations". She was referring to herself as a martyr-in-waiting, coming to the end of her "long and weary pilgrimage".

We can only speculate about what Elizabeth was thinking through these difficult months, as petitioners arrived from France and Scotland hoping to intercede on Mary's behalf. Mary's enemies at court grew impatient but, on 1 February, Elizabeth finally signed the death warrant. She claimed to have told her Secretary of State to keep it safe but also appears to have indicated that she wanted to hear no more about the matter. To add more confusion, a suggestion arose that Mary's gaoler might quietly do away with her, but he refused. Faced with so much uncertainty, the Privy Council elected to seal and send the death


MARIA DEI GRATIA SCOTORUM REGINA
ELIZABETH DEI GR. ANG. FR. ET HIB. REGINA
FAC-SIMILE OF AN OFFICIAL COPY OF THE WARRANT FOR THE EXECUTION OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.
Elizabeth R

The death warrant of Mary, Queen of Scots, signed by Elizabeth I

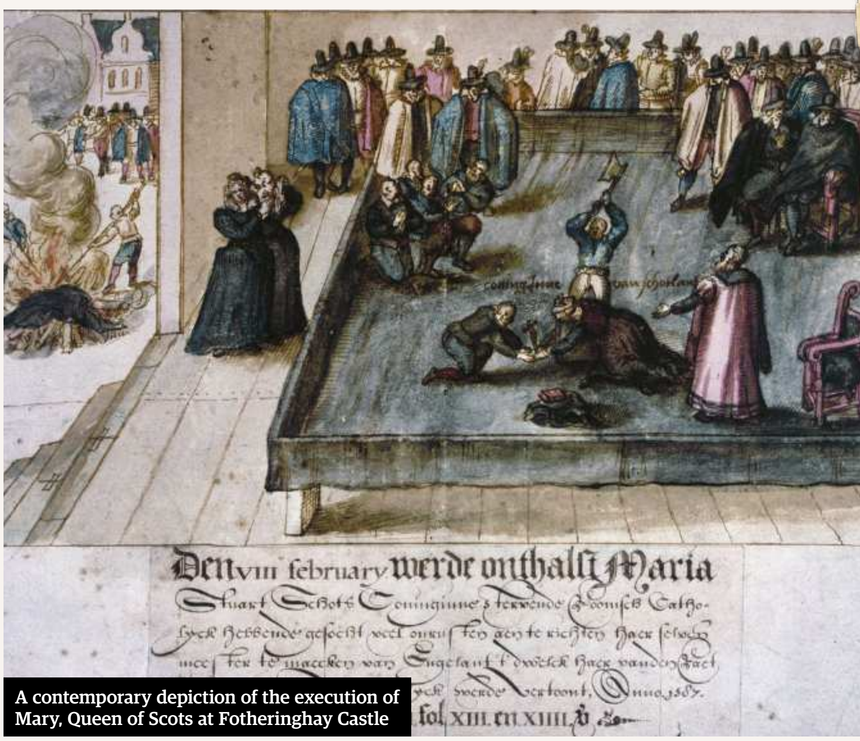
Appeasing Parliament
Parliament meets to discuss Mary with various calls for either her execution or formal exclusion from the succession. Elizabeth consents to the execution of Norfolk to calm the waters.
May-June 1572

Catholic scheming
The Throckmorton Plot is revealed, the goal of which was for the Duke of Guise to invade England with Spanish support and replace Elizabeth I with Mary, Queen of Scots.
November 1583

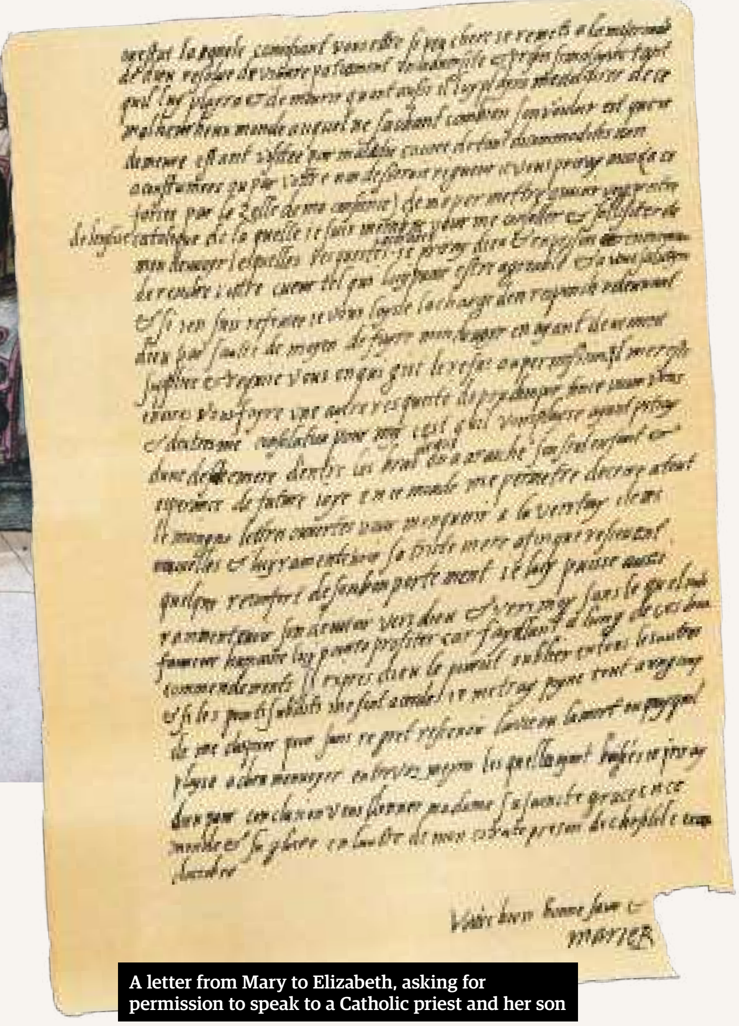
End the pretenders
The Bond of Association is established. This involved taking an oath to prosecute to death any pretender in whose name an assassination attempt against Elizabeth is launched.
19 October 1584

Imprisoned queen
Mary is brought under more restrictive imprisonment and moved from Tutbury Castle to Chartley Hall, Staffordshire, in December. She remained there for nine months.
January 1585

Another Catholic plot
The Babington Plot, with the aim of assassinating Elizabeth, takes place. The English government is fully aware of the machinations and attempts to make Mary implicate herself.
March-July 1586


Den viii february werde onthallst Maria
fol. XIII.CII.XIIII

A contemporary depiction of the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots at Fotheringhay Castle



Votre bien bonne sœur et
MARIE R

A letter from Mary to Elizabeth, asking for permission to speak to a Catholic priest and her son

"Elizabeth fell into a frenzy of grief, lashing out at the councillors who had sent the warrant to the castle"

warrant to Fotheringhay Castle, where Mary was being held. Mary was executed on the morning of 8 February and by the afternoon bells were ringing and celebratory bonfires burning in London. Elizabeth fell into a frenzy of grief, lashing out at the councillors who had sent the warrant to the castle. Perhaps this was genuine anger, perhaps stage-managed, or maybe derived from a sense of guilt for an action for which she could not avoid some element of responsibility.

From that day to this, judgements of Mary have been sharply divided. For Richard Crompton, writing shortly after the execution, "She was the only hope of all discontented subjects, she was the foundation whereon all the evil disposed did build, she was the root from which all rebellions and treacheries did spring." The Jesuit Robert Southwell saw things differently, giving voice to Mary in one of his poems:

"Alive a queen, now dead I am a saint;
Once Mary called, my name now martyr is;
From earthly reign debarred by restraint,
In lieu whereof I live in heaven's bliss."

As one might expect, Job Throckmorton declared that "it was, out of all question, a very worthy act that was lately done at Fotheringay." Not that Mary's demise brought an end to his outbursts. Just a few weeks after Mary's death, he turned his sights on foreign policy and offered bitter denunciations of polities around Europe. Spain was the enemy du jour, so we can assume that no one was particularly perturbed when the MP announced that the nation was "possessed by an incestuous race of bastards", but taking pot shots at friendly countries was a different matter. He despaired of Scotland being ruled by "so young and wavering a head", and his attack on France likely took some members' breath away. The French king, he averred, was "stricken with a fearful kind of giddiness, as it were a man in a trance or kind of ecstasy", but what could one expect from the descendants of someone like Catherine de' Medici?

This time around, Throckmorton's venom was deemed untimely. His speech was denounced as "lewd and blasphemous" and he was advised that it was best not to speak "sharply of princes"; it was important to "use great regard of princes in free speech." Such courtesy, as those present at the admonishment must have realised, had rarely been extended to Mary, Queen of Scots.

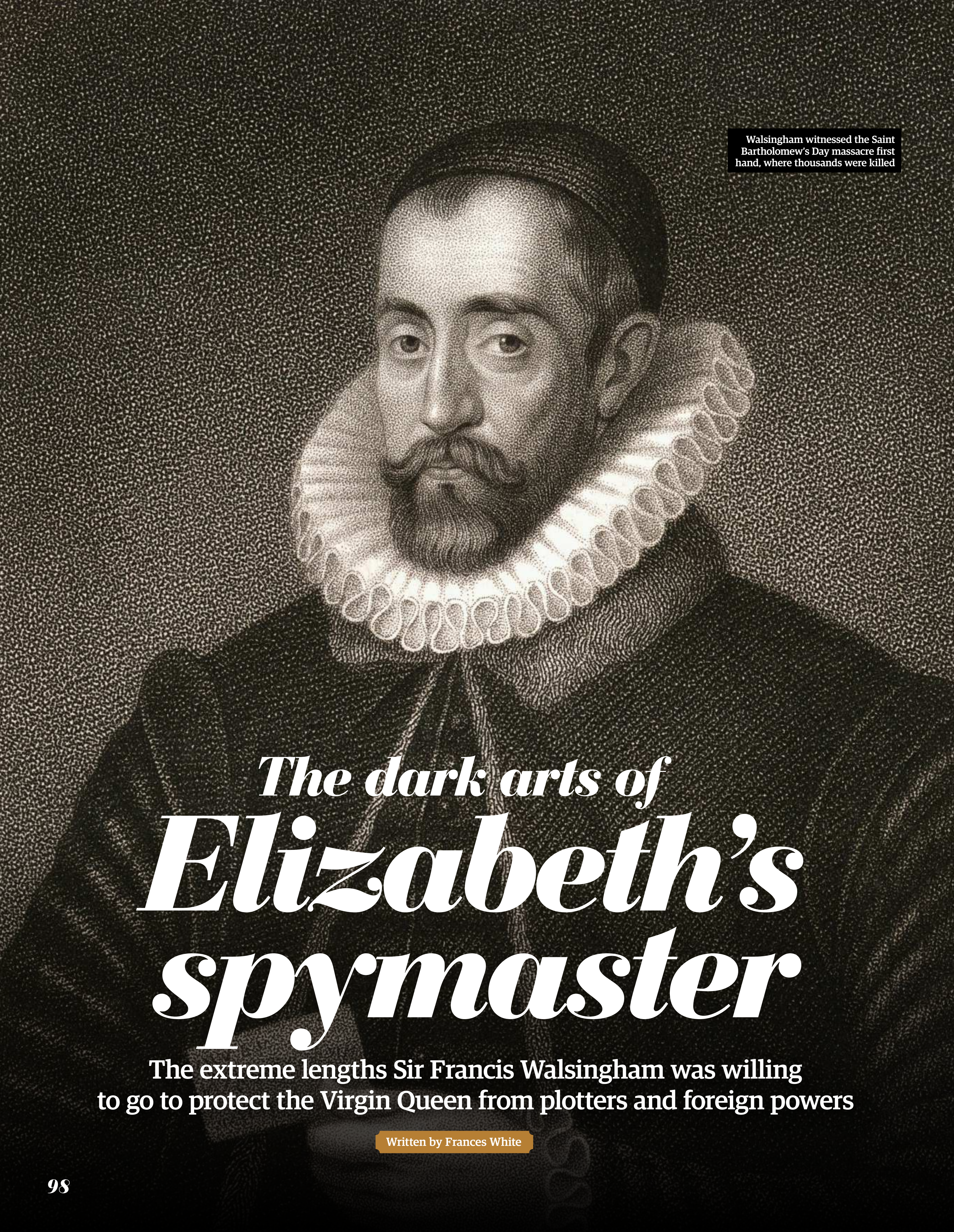
Mary is implicated
Babington writes to Mary, who replies on 17 July, giving Walsingham the ammunition he needs to implicate them both. Babington and his co-conspirators are executed on 20 September.
6 July 1586

To kill a queen?
A commission to try Mary is established and she's moved to Fotheringhay Castle. A hearing takes place on 14-15 October, followed by proceedings in Star Chamber on 25 October.
9 September 1586

Declared to die
Parliament assembles and petitions for Mary's execution on 12 and 24 November. After being convicted, her death sentence is proclaimed on 4 December.
29 October 1586

1587

Off with her head
Elizabeth reluctantly signs Mary's death warrant. Mary Stuart is executed at Fotheringhay Castle on 8 February aged 44 like, in her own words, "a common criminal".
1 February 1587



Walsingham witnessed the Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre first hand, where thousands were killed

The dark arts of Elizabeth's spymaster

The extreme lengths Sir Francis Walsingham was willing to go to protect the Virgin Queen from plotters and foreign powers

Written by Frances White

The Elizabethan era is often seen as a golden age for England. The Virgin Queen offered stability after the bloody reigns of her brother and sister, Edward VI and Mary I. This led to a flourishing of literarure, art and music, with Shakespeare performing regularly in London. England also established its first colony, following Sir Walter Raleigh's exploration of the New World.

Despite this cultural and colonial renaissance, 16th century England was the centre of a web of political intrigue. Elizabeth I was in constant danger of plots to overthrow her, with discontented Catholics who wanted to see an end to Protestant rule. These plotters were often in league with the most powerful nations in Europe, including Spain, France and the Papacy, all of whom had spies in the Queen's court.

Fortunately, England had its own man in the shadows, a pioneer that would set the standard for secret intelligence for centuries. But like so many spies living on the edge, this man and his agents would blur the line between right and wrong to protect queen and country. Francis Walsingham was born into a well-connected family – one of many that who had found their wealth in the capital, then moved out and established themselves as landed gentry in the countryside. His father was a well-connected lawyer but he died when Francis was only two years old. His mother quickly remarried to Sir John Carey, a relation of Anne Boleyn through marriage. His strong familial links placed young Walsingham right in the centre of the most powerful players in England at the time.

Walsingham experienced a privileged education but like many staunch Protestants, he had to flee the country when the zealous Catholic Mary Tudor ascended the throne. During this period he lived in Italy, developing his language abilities and, more importantly, his people skills. This was the first time he had been able to meet and converse with all different kinds of people and he would later comment that it was important to take note of the "manners and dispositions" of people from all walks of life. Walsingham was already cultivating the shrewd charisma and persuasiveness that would see him become one of the most powerful men in England.

When Elizabeth was crowned in 1558, it was finally safe for Walsingham to return to the country. Only a few months later, he was elected as a member of parliament, though he had very little enthusiasm for this role despite holding it until his death. There was something he did have an interest in, however, and with Elizabeth's ascension the age of it had begun – espionage.

England's relationship with Spain had been good under Mary I – she had even undergone a marriage with King Philip – and there was talk of Elizabeth continuing this trend. However, this was not to be. Rather than strengthening the bond between the two nations, the countries drifted further apart. Of course, the very Catholic king of Spain was not overly fond of Elizabeth's Protestant allegiances and when Protestant rebellions sparked in Spanish-owned countries, England's calls for Protestant unity were not unheard by Philip. These tensions eventually mounted into Spanish ships attacking English privateers and any chance of an amicable alliance was lost.

The king himself, Philip II, did little to help relations. He was a notoriously suspicious man, untrusting even of his own faithful servants, and he often disgraced men and women loyal to him.

> "There was something he did have an interest in, however, and with Elizabeth's ascension the age of it had begun – espionage"

The queen and her moor

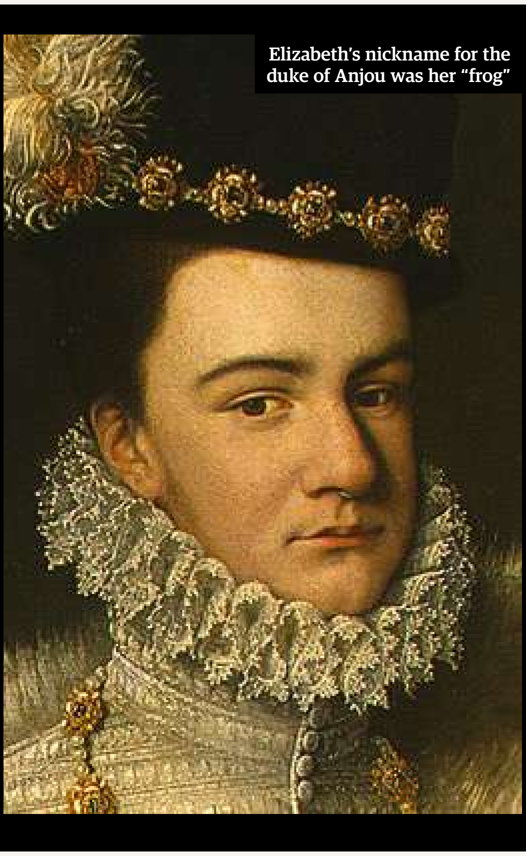
Despite the fact that Walsingham likely saved the queen's life countless times by thwarting conspiracies aimed to eliminate her, their relationship was complicated. It is no great secret that Elizabeth was a larger-than-life personality – loud, brash and outspoken – and she didn't mince her words. Although she famously never married, Elizabeth was particularly fond of men and her support structure was composed pretty much entirely of them. She liked men who cooed over her, and especially ones who said what she wanted to hear. Walsingham, however, was not one of them.

The two of them frequently disagreed on policy. Walsingham was very direct, honest and rather passionate about his opinions. For one, he was convinced that a marriage that Elizabeth sought between herself and Francis, the Duke of Anjou, was not a wise idea. In fact, he opposed the union so adamantly that when he failed to secure it, Elizabeth furiously dismissed him from court for several months.

Despite these fiery encounters, Elizabeth was not a fool – she saw how talented and vital Walsingham was to her court and gave him role after role of pivotal responsibility in both domestic and foreign affairs, even trusting him to talk on her behalf with foreign ambassadors.

Elizabeth often mocked Walsingham's zealous beliefs and sober demeanour, even calling him a rank Puritan. But she did give him one of her nicknames, calling him her "moor" due to his dark appearance. The queen's nicknames, though often appearing to be derivative, were saved solely for those she was fondest of, so it is clear she harboured a certain amount of affection for Walsingham.

Although their relationship may have been rocky, the queen valued him for his trustworthiness, honesty and council and even his dry humour. Over time, rather than fighting against him, Elizabeth accepted her spymaster for who he was – "her Moor [who] cannot change his colour."



Elizabeth's nickname for the duke of Anjou was her "frog"

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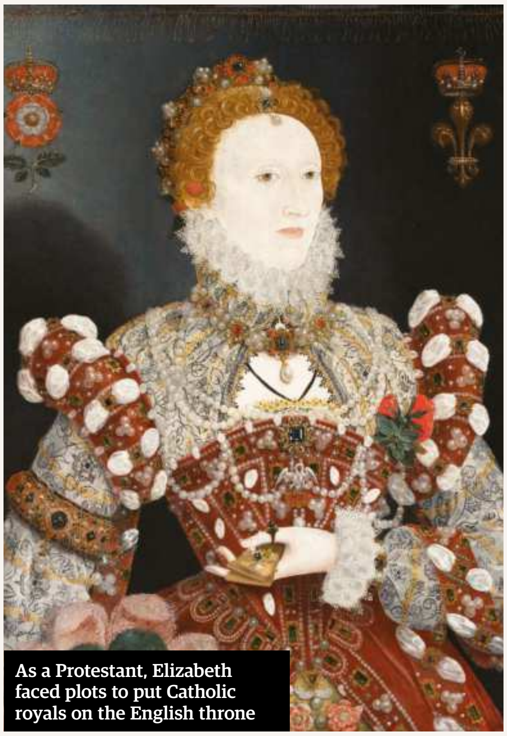


As a Protestant, Elizabeth faced plots to put Catholic royals on the English throne

> "Distrust and betrayal created the perfect atmosphere for foreign powers to take advantage – and England intended to expose and extort the king's weaknesses"

He was dubbed the 'spider king' due to the many plots he would weave from the shadows.

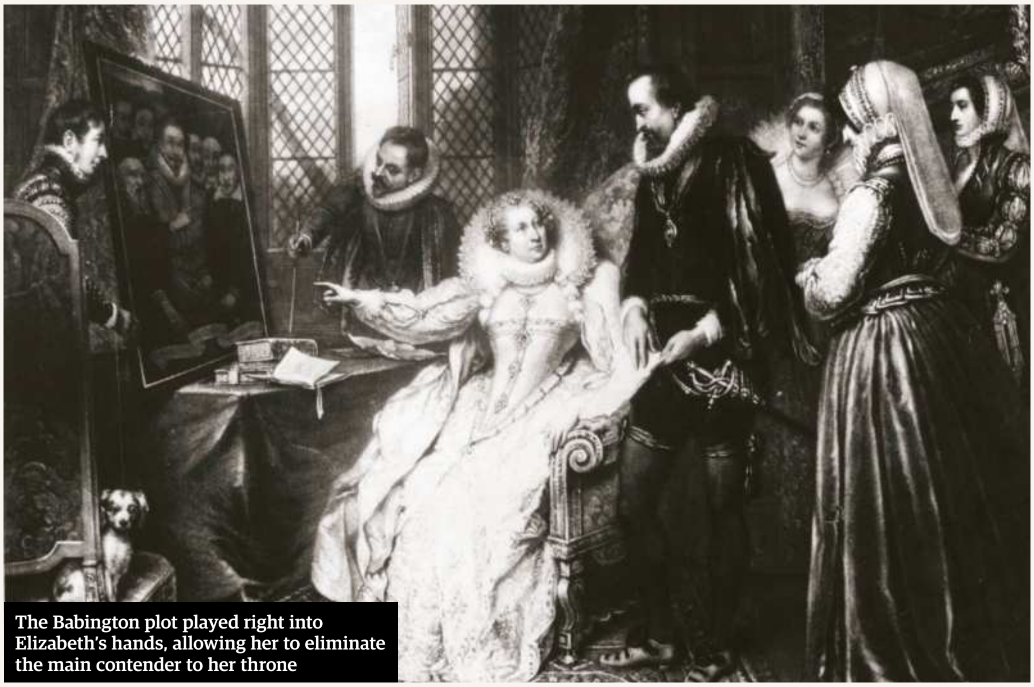
His own court historian wrote that "his smile and his dagger were very close." This caused bitter infighting within the Spanish court, which seeped into government and the country itself. This court of distrust and betrayal created the perfect atmosphere for foreign powers to take advantage – and England intended to expose and extort of all of the king's weaknesses.

Walsingham had already been plucked by William Cecil, Elizabeth's most trusted secretary, to perform 'confidential' tasks. He was a talented linguist and used his skills to spy on foreigners in London who may have borne ill will towards the monarch. Walsingham was not only good at this – his skills were unparalleled. He developed his own resources, recruiting talented men to work for him throughout the country, as well as in the major cities of Europe.

He was already hearing whispers of a plan by Spanish and French Catholics to place the Catholic Mary Stuart – also known as Mary, Queen of Scots – on the throne and he urged Cecil to take these rumours seriously, saying that "there is less danger in fearing too much than too little." This mantra would follow him throughout his career and see him foil some of the most dangerous conspiracies against a monarch in English history.

Walsingham's persuasion skills did not go unnoticed and between 1570 and 1573 he served as the ambassador to the French court. Here he tried to obtain a union between Elizabeth and the Duke of Anjou, hoping that an alliance between the two old enemies would stop France from siding with Spain against England. However, he merely became convinced that an accord between the two nations with their dividing religious beliefs was now impossible, and that instead it is "less peril to live with them as enemies, than as friends."

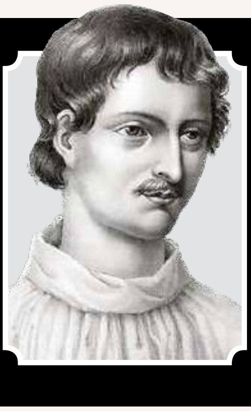
Walsingham knew enemies – he knew how to spy on them and how to deal with them. He knew how to be distrustful. What he wasn't so good at was cultivating friendships. He was dry, dark, sallow and brutally honest with his companions. For many, Walsingham was a difficult pill to swallow and he even had fiery encounters with Elizabeth herself. However, all this was tolerated due to his political and intelligence-gathering skills. Elizabeth knew she faced one of the greatest political schemers in Philip II and she needed her own weaver of plots in order to best him.



The Babington plot played right into Elizabeth's hands, allowing her to eliminate the main contender to her throne

The rogues gallery

The spies who sold their honour for fame & glory



Giordano Bruno

An Italian friar, poet and philosopher, Bruno was close friends with Philip Sydney. While he was in London, it is believed that Walsingham had him deployed as a spy for the court in the French embassy. His information led to the reveal of a plot to dispose of Elizabeth and replace her with Mary Stuart.

Thomas Phelippes

Coming from humble origins as the son of a cloth merchant, Phelippes managed to climb the social ladder thanks to his ability with languages. Speaking French, Italian, Spanish, Latin and German, his skills transferred to make him a talented cryptographer and he was snatched up by Walsingham to decipher enemy letters. His work proved that Mary Stuart was involved in a plot to oust Elizabeth, resulting in her execution.

Walsingham returned to England towards the end of 1573 and was made a principal secretary, handling domestic and foreign affairs – but his attention was drawn to one person. He knew that all Catholic hope now rested on Mary Stuart and as long as she remained alive, schemes would rise up to put her on the throne. Walsingham was determined to squash every single one of them.

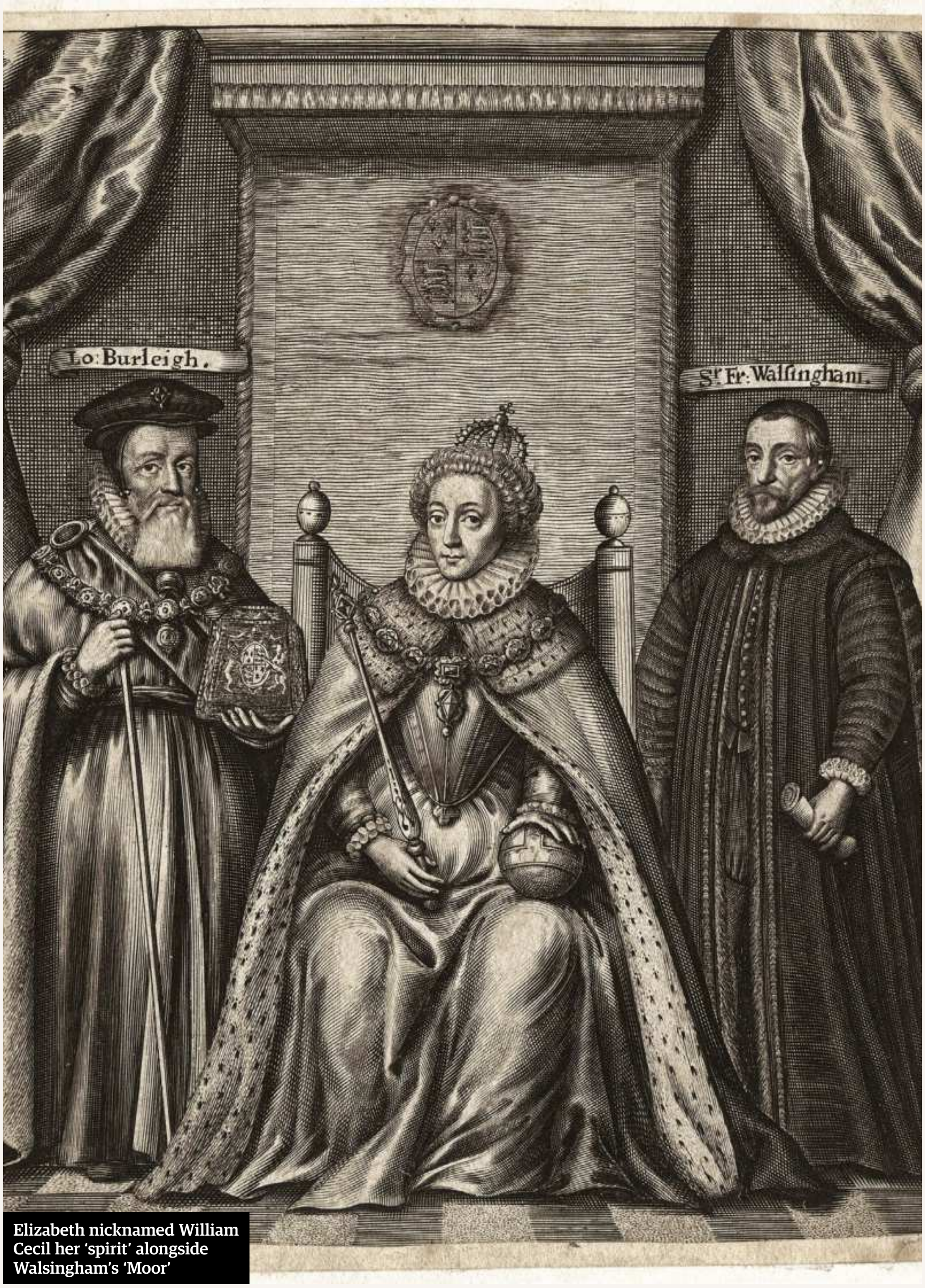
The spymaster concentrated on expanding his ring. Walsingham had eyes not only in every major county of England, but also France, Scotland, Spain, Italy, Turkey and even as far as North Africa. It is rumoured that at one time he had 53 agents in foreign courts and 18 more with undefined roles.

Almost all of these spies were Catholics willing to betray each other and he obtained his men by any means necessary. Walsingham used prison informants and double agents sourced through bribery and even threats. At home, men were trained to decipher correspondence, feigning handwriting and even in the art of repairing seals so nobody would ever know they had been tampered with.

It was the vastest and arguably most successful spy ring of the Elizabethan age and a model that would be replicated and expanded on into the 20th century. Walsingham was eventually given an annual stipend of £2,000 a year – a huge amount for the era – in order to fund his secret activities. He wasn't the only person employing and using spies at this time, far from it, but his ring was so extensive and deployed so expertly that no one else could hope to rival it.

Walsingham's efforts did not go unrewarded. In 1583, one of his spies in the French embassy in London caught wind of secret documents being passed through the embassy itself. The man suspected of being involved was Francis Throckmorton, and Walsingham placed him under increased surveillance. He was arrested six months later and on his person was a map of invasion ports and a list of Catholic supporters.

After some persuasive torture techniques, the details of the plan were confessed. Throckmorton was involved in a planned invasion of England by


Lo: Burleigh.
Sr Fr: Walsingham.

Elizabeth nicknamed William Cecil her 'spirit' alongside Walsingham's 'Moor'

Robert Poley

Poley's origins are swathed in mystery. In 1580, he appeared almost out of nowhere with an inexplicable large amount of money. He was determined to find work as a spy and Sir Francis Walsingham ushered him into the network as a Catholic informer. He befriended the masterminds of the Babington plot and was monumental in its undoing.

Gilbert Gifford

Born a Catholic, Gifford was ordained as a Catholic deacon. He was actually arrested by Walsingham but agreed to work as a double agent. He befriended Mary Stuart and secretly delivered coded letters from her to Walsingham. After the plot was revealed, he fled to France and was ordained as a priest in Rheims. To this day, whether he was allied to Walsingham and Elizabeth or Mary remains a mystery.

Antony Standen

Standen was another Catholic who had been convinced by Walsingham to act as a spy. Although he was settled in France, he was able to obtain crucial information about plans for the Spanish Armada for over two years, including a list of ships, supplies and men. Despite his service to England, Standen's devotion to the Catholic Church resulted in him being imprisoned in the Tower.

© Getty

combined French and Spanish troops, as well as a planned assassination of the queen that would end by placing Mary Stuart on the throne in her place.

Not only was Throckmorton convicted of treason and executed, but the Spanish ambassador, found to be involved in the plot, was expelled from the country. The conspiracy revealed plainly that Spain was never going to be an ally to an England ruled by Elizabeth and diplomatic relations with the country were severed – no more Spanish ambassadors would be welcome in the London court. Spain was now officially an enemy.

The Throckmorton plot only served to increase Walsingham's concerns about growing support for Mary within England itself and he was right to be suspicious. Cut off from correspondence for nearly a year, Mary was eager to take advantage of a chance to send and receive her mail through beer barrels. Little did Mary know, her letters were falling right into the hands of Walsingham and his men, decoded and read in London, then sent on their way.

During this infiltration, messages were received from Anthony Babington, a wealthy Catholic gentleman who had recruited his own team with one aim in mind – assassinate Elizabeth. This society also had links with Europe and, of course, Spain. Before the plot, or the queen, could be executed, Walsingham tricked the men into revealing themselves and they were promptly rounded up and arrested. Many of the conspirators were tortured, most notably a priest, Ballard, who had to be carried to his execution in a chair as he was unable to walk.

However, the biggest success was that it directly implicated Mary herself in the scheme. Elizabeth finally had reason to act and Mary was arrested, sent to trial and found guilty. The queen then signed her own cousin's death warrant and she was beheaded. The Catholic threat, from within England at least, was, for now, eliminated and it was all thanks to Walsingham's sharp eyes and ears across the nation.

Although Walsingham was successful with foiling plots from within the nation, the threat from outside was still very real. Philip the spider king had given up all pretence of allying with England and instead set about making sure Spain would be the most powerful nation in Europe.

His most alarming action was his move to conquer Portugal by force, claiming the land was his as the recently deceased king was his childless nephew. Elizabeth, however fiery, did not wish to go to war with the nation but found herself with no option but to send troops to the Protestant rebels in the Netherlands, who were revolting against the Spanish king's hegemony. To Philip, this move was unacceptable – he believed that only by defeating

Crime and punishment

Elizabeth's top torturer had ways of making you talk

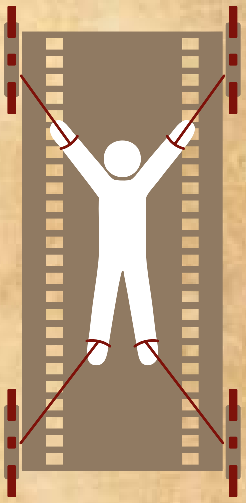
Richard Topcliffe was born into a very well connected family, with links to Anne Boleyn and Catherine Parr. When his father died young, he found himself in charge of a large and wealthy estate. A close companion of the queen, he was employed to extract 'confessions' through interrogation and often torture. Bashed by some as an inhumane beast capable of unimaginable cruelty, he would often attend the execution of his victims as a kind of master of ceremonies. Described as a "veteran in evil", Topcliffe made no attempts to hide his methods but instead was immensely proud of his work.

Manacles

Prisoners were hung by the wrists in metal manacles. This procedure would last for hours at a time without any break and could cause permanent internal injury and death.

The Rack

An Elizabethan classic, a man was fastened to the contraption and very slowly and painfully stretched, causing bones to become dislocated. Topcliffe put his own spin on this by placing a large stone under the victim's spine.

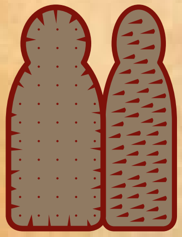


Mental Torture

Not all of Topcliffe's abuse was physical – he would also talk to and scream at his victims to break their spirit along with their body. He would lie to and berate them until they no longer knew the truth from their dark prison cell.

Torture Machine

Somewhat of a mystery, Topcliffe was known to have his own torture chamber created in his London home. There he claimed to have a torture machine designed by himself that was apparently far more efficient at eliciting confessions.



Rape

Although not a legal form of torture, at least one confirmed case of rape occurred during Topcliffe's torture sessions. Either himself or one of his men raped Anne Bellamy to extract a suspect's location. She became pregnant and was forced to marry Topcliffe's servant to cover up the crime.

England could he continue his quest for power and control over Europe.

Philip had a plan and it was a huge one. He would create an armada large and powerful enough to put a stop to England's meddling once and for all – and conquer it in the process. He did everything he could to gain Catholic support across Europe for this mission against the Protestant nation, although quite a few of these allies showed doubt if Philip's interests were truly to Catholicism or purely to Spain. However, for all intents and purposes, things were going to plan. As he rapidly built up his numbers, Philip secretly schemed the downfall of his most persistent thorns – Elizabeth and England.

England, however, was not oblivious to the spider king's plans. Walsingham had already been informed by his many spies, expertly placed in foreign courts across Europe, that Spain planned to launch an invasion of the country. He wasn't powerful enough to stop it completely but his intelligence meant he could certainly prepare the country and lessen the threat.

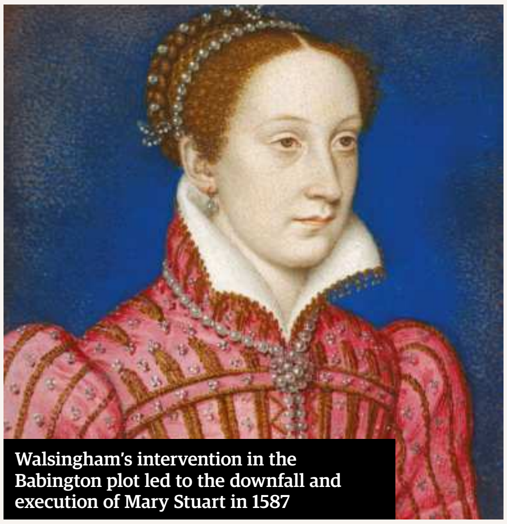
Dover Harbour was rebuilt so it was ready for an invasion and he urged his agents across the world to promote more aggressive strategies by attacking Spanish holdings in the hope that this would distract Spain, giving him more time to prepare. In particular, he ensured that Francis Drake's surprise raid on Cadiz would remain just that, which he did by feeding false information to the England ambassador in Paris.

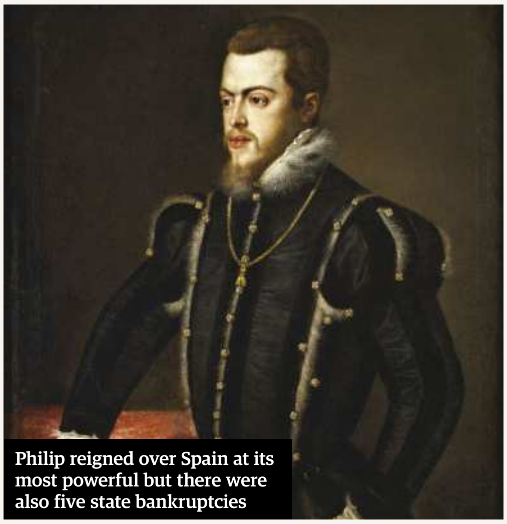
Walsingham already suspected the ambassador was working for the Spanish and, as usual, his hunch was correct. Drake's raid was a success – it wreaked havoc with the Spanish logistics and set the launch of the Armada back considerably.

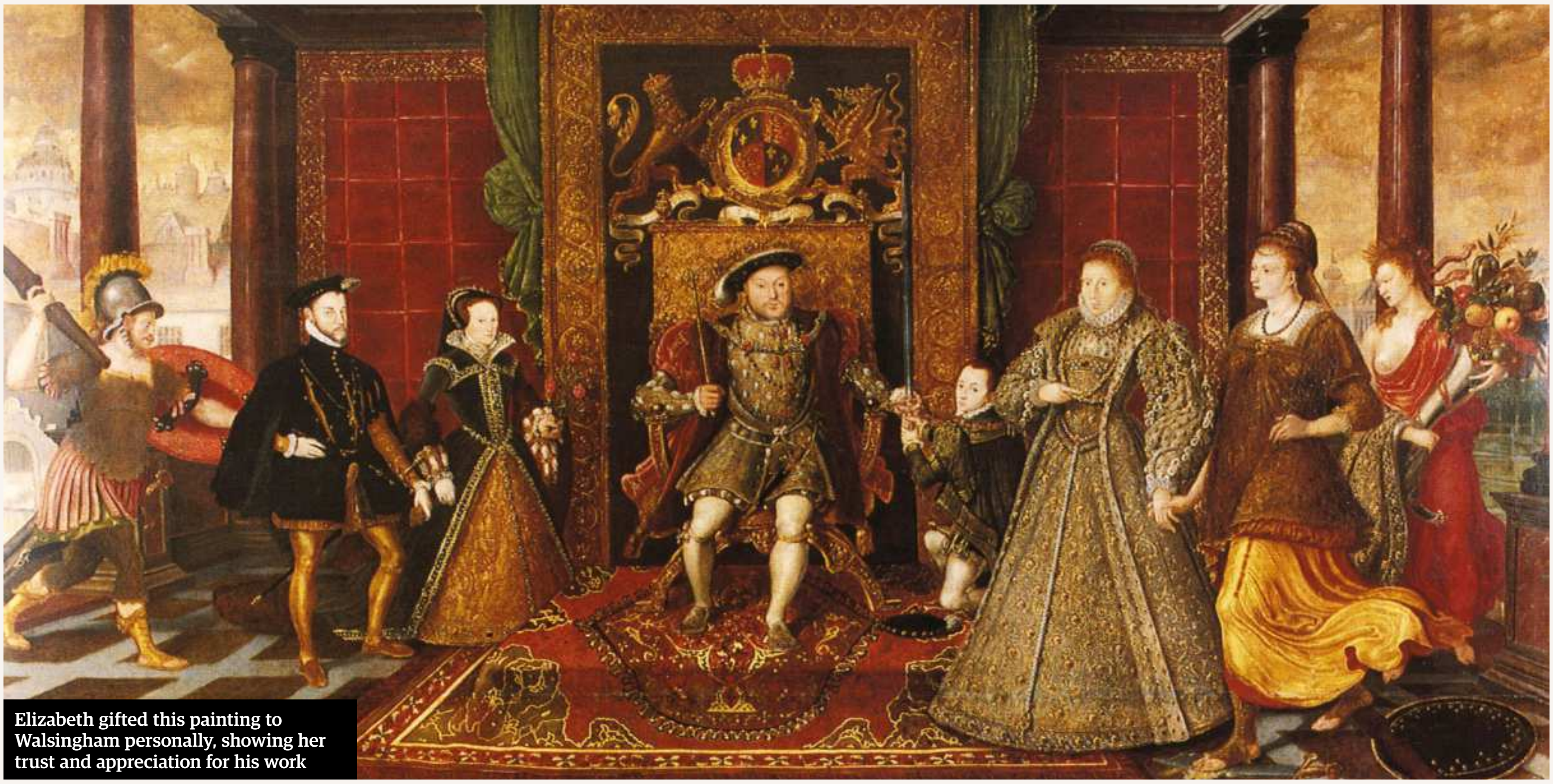
When the Armada finally set sail in 1588, Walsingham already knew how many ships to expect, how many men were on board and what they were carrying. Not only was the 'moor' given frequent updates from the English Navy, but he even raised his own land defence, should it get that far, with 260 men at his command.

When the Armada was vanquished in August 1588, the naval commander Lord Henry Seymour wrote to Walsingham, "You have fought more with your pen than many have in our English navy fought with their enemies." For now, at least, the Spanish threat was crushed but Philip would continue to set his sights on England for years to come. However, as long as Walsingham and his spies were listening in the shadows, Elizabeth would be one step ahead of Philip's ploys.

> "As long as Walsingham and his spies were listening in the shadows, Elizabeth would be one step ahead of Philip's ploys"


Walsingham's intervention in the Babington plot led to the downfall and execution of Mary Stuart in 1587


Philip reigned over Spain at its most powerful but there were also five state bankruptcies


Elizabeth gifted this painting to Walsingham personally, showing her trust and appreciation for his work

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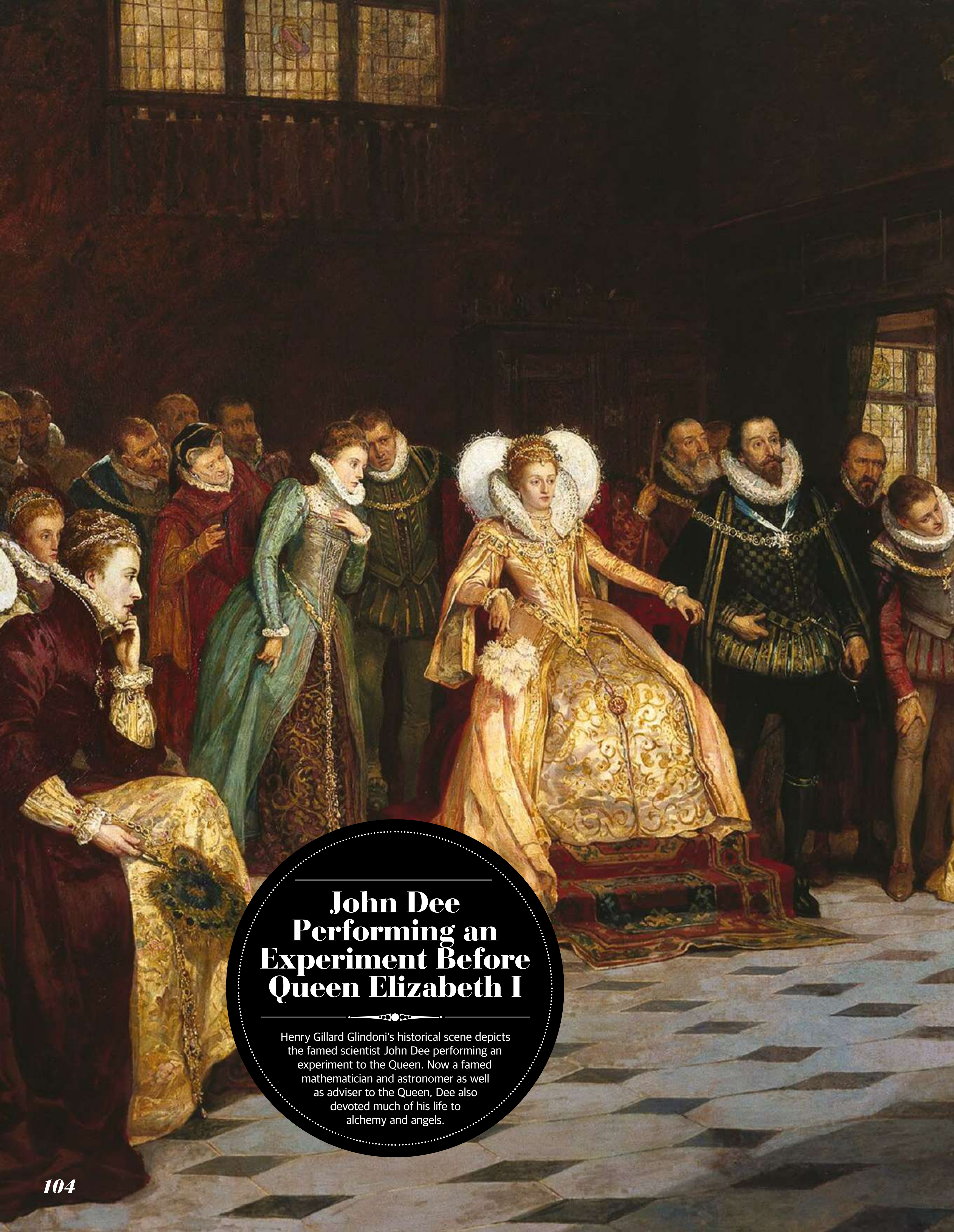
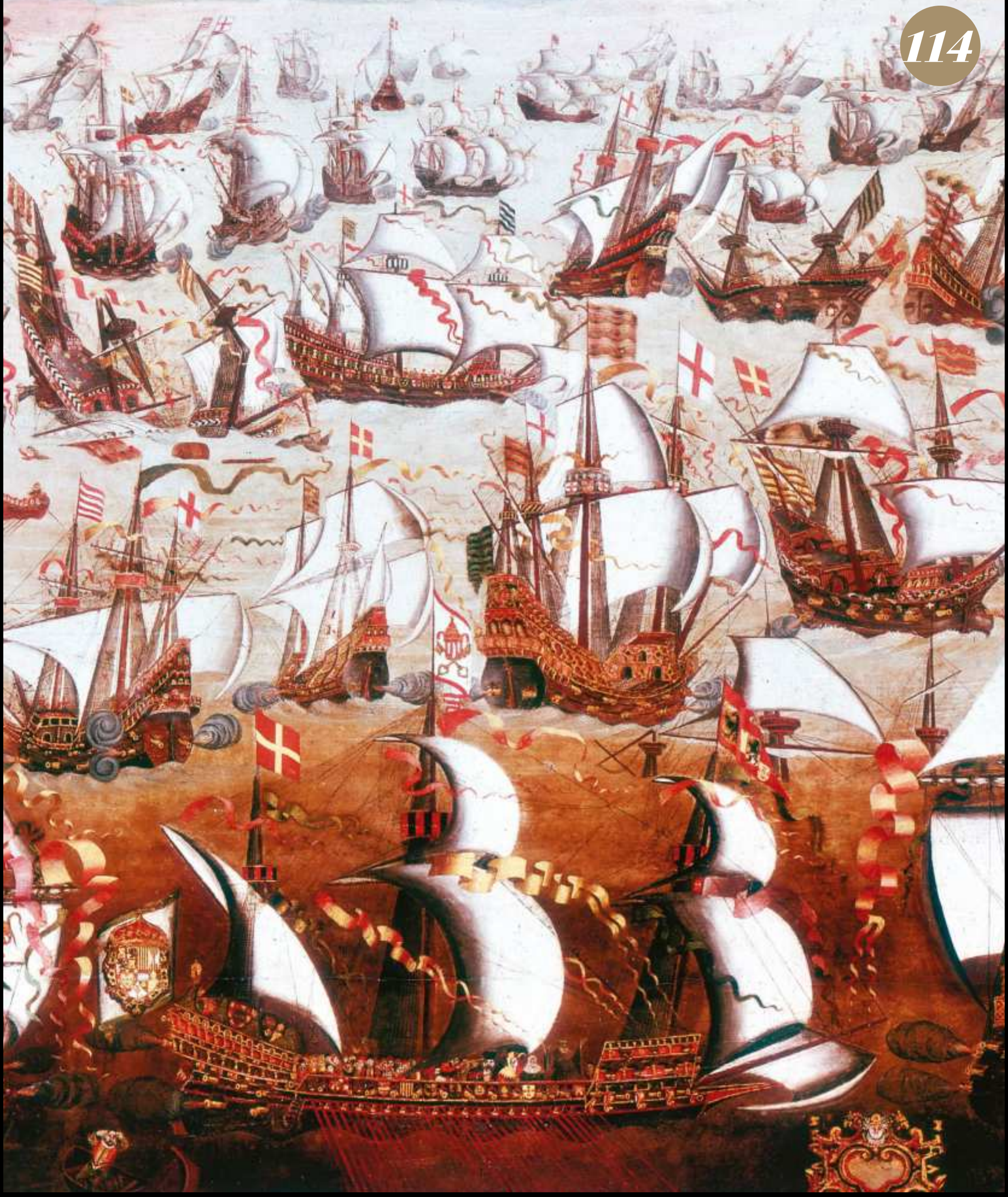


John Dee Performing an Experiment Before Queen Elizabeth I

Henry Gillard Glindoni's historical scene depicts the famed scientist John Dee performing an experiment to the Queen. Now a famed mathematician and astronomer as well as adviser to the Queen, Dee also devoted much of his life to alchemy and angels.



War

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The confrontation of the Catholic Goliath and the Protestant David might have, could have, should have ended differently. Why didn't it?

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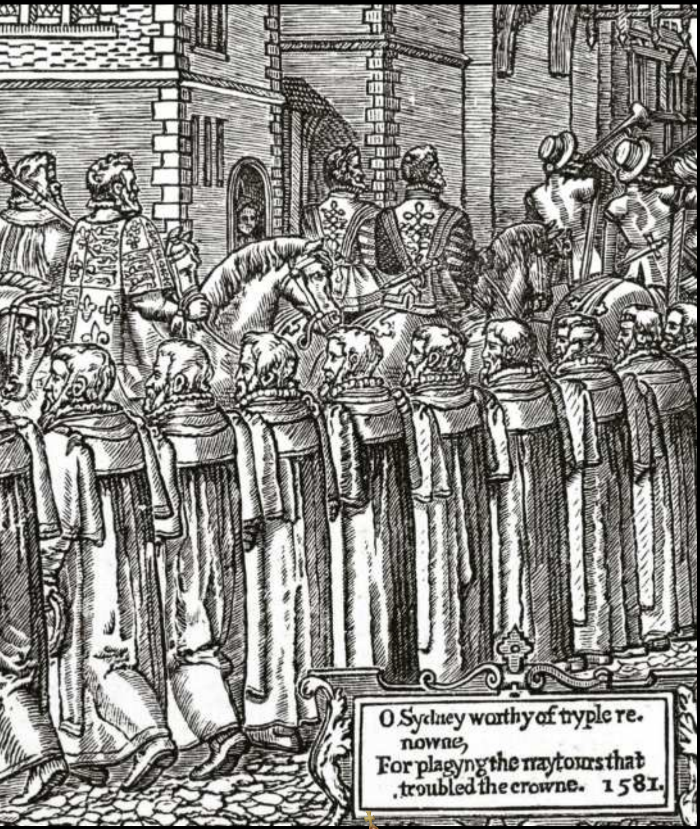
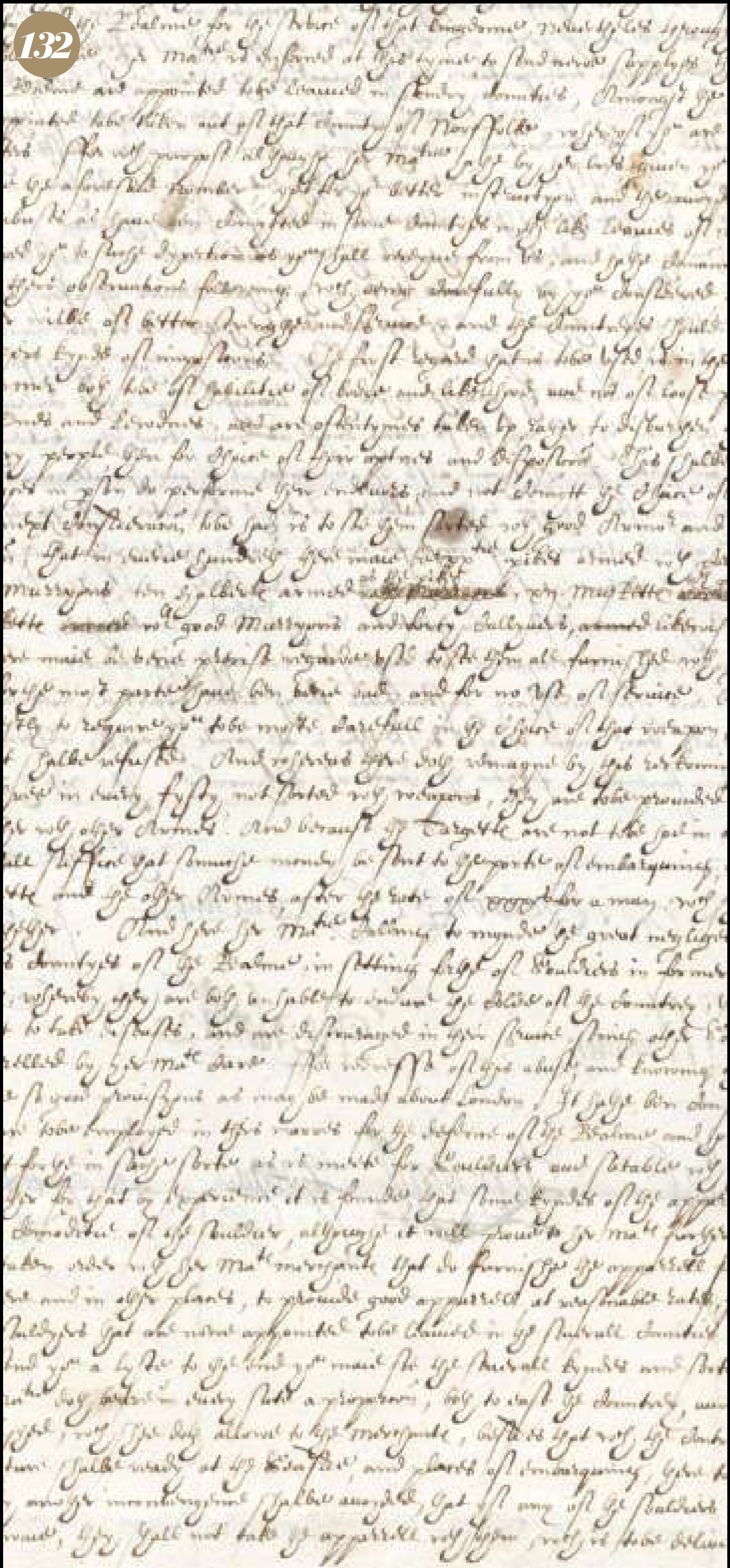
Find out how Elizabeth reacted when faced with troubles in Ireland


O Sydney worthy of tryple renowne,
For plagyng the traytours that troubled the crowne. 1581.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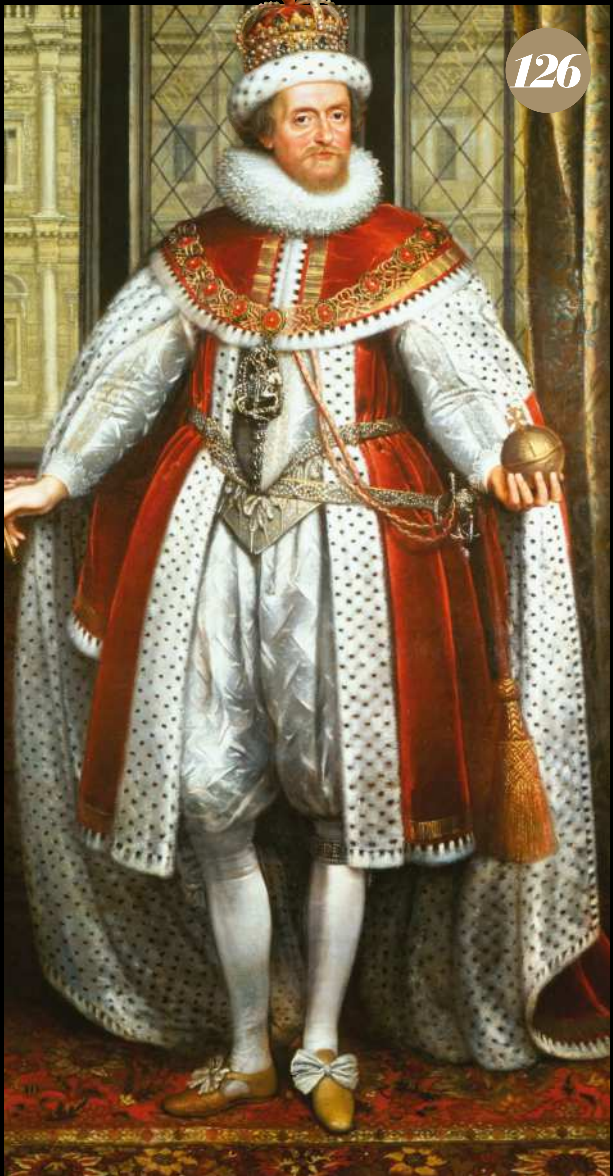
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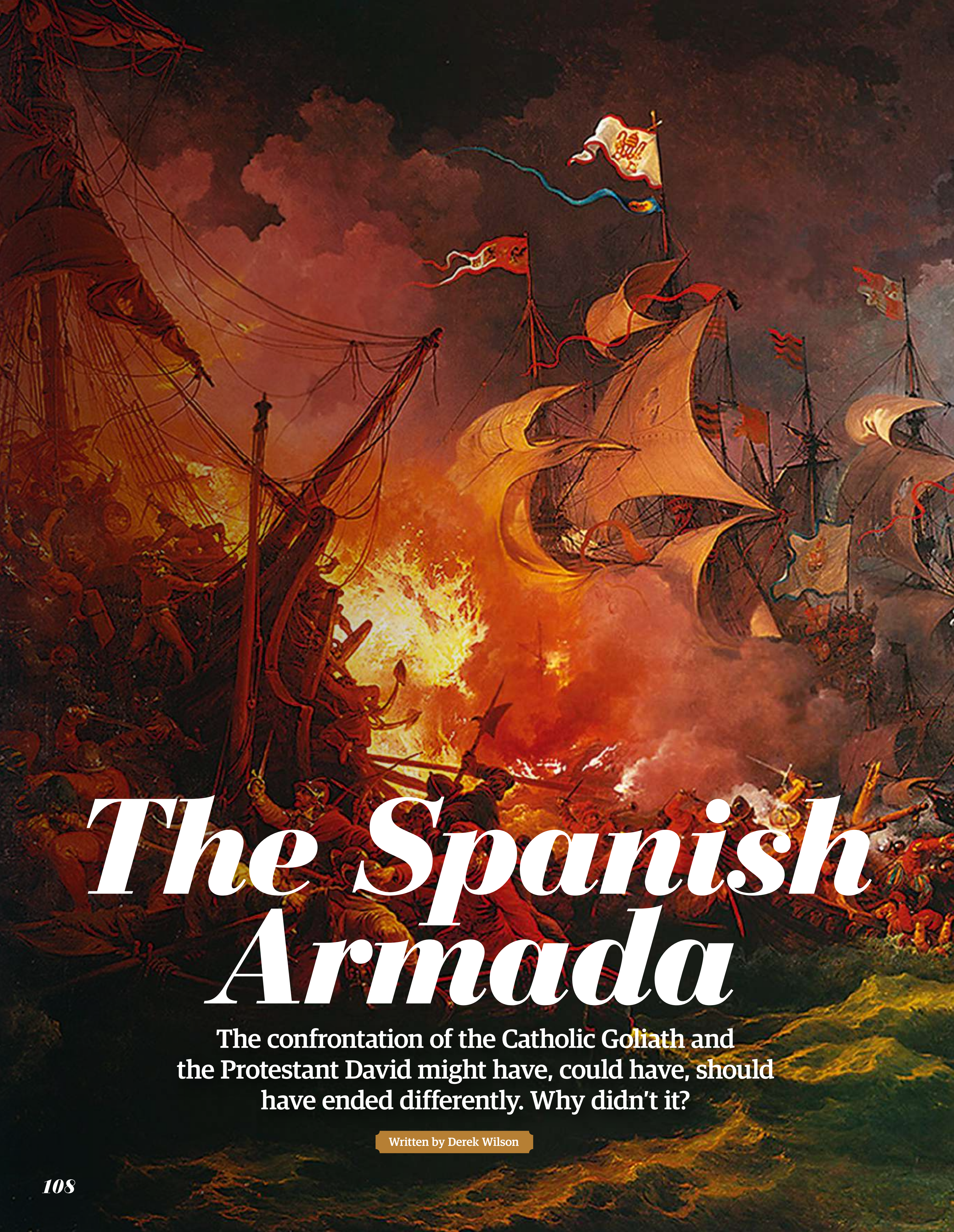
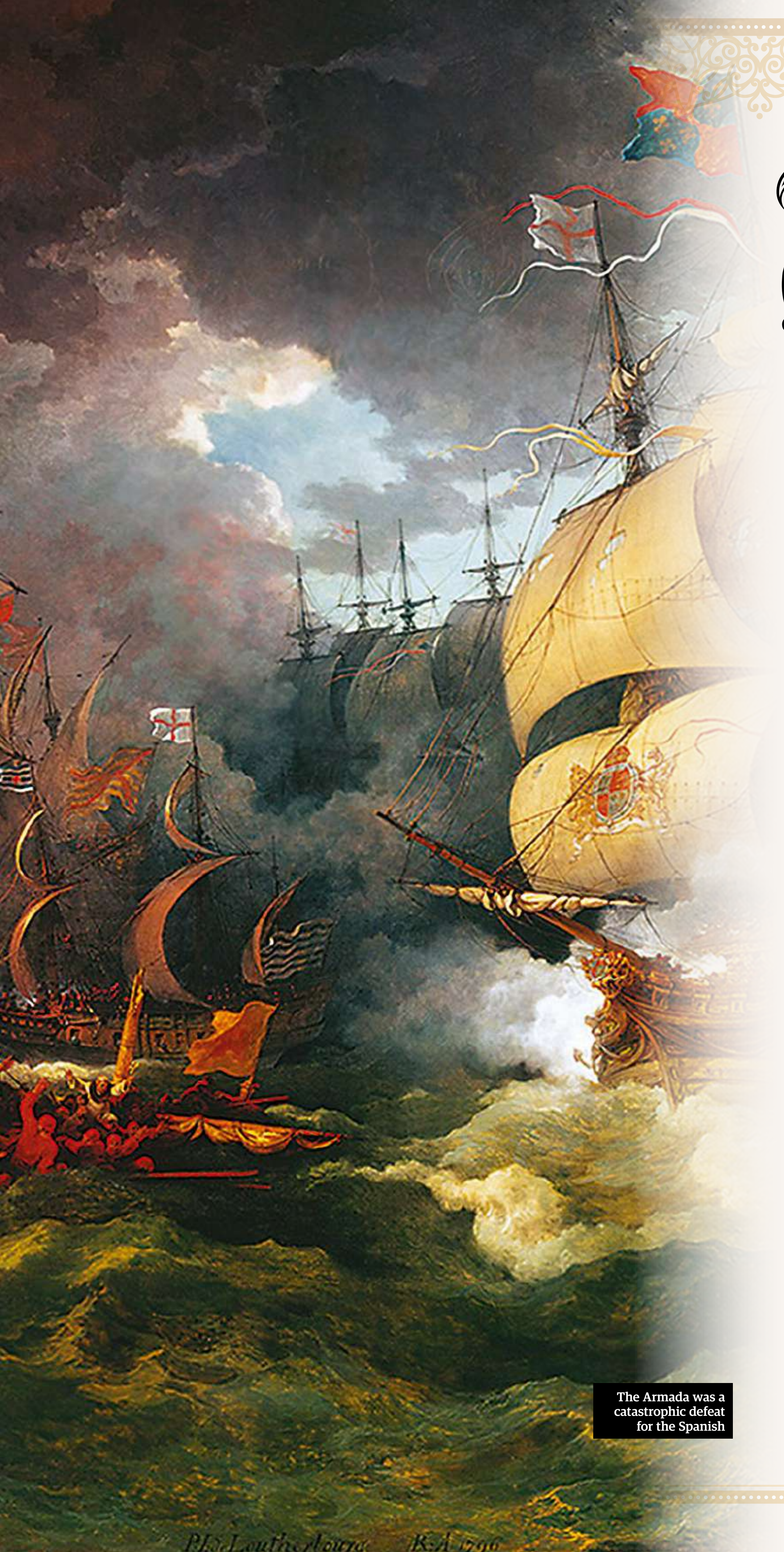


The Spanish Armada

The confrontation of the Catholic Goliath and the Protestant David might have, could have, should have ended differently. Why didn't it?

Written by Derek Wilson

The Spanish Armada



The Armada was a catastrophic defeat for the Spanish

The year 1580 is important in the politico-religious history of Europe for two reasons. Philip II of Spain added Portugal and its overseas empire to his already extensive European and New World possessions. In that same year Francis Drake returned to England in his ship the Golden Hind and became the first captain to complete a circumnavigation of the globe. Philip's political coup was the zenith of 90 years of colonial aggrandisement. As one sycophantic courtier assured him, "You are on the road towards universal monarchy and on the point of uniting Christendom under a single shepherd". Drake's achievement was the impressive but tenuous beginning of 300 years of colonial expansion. In 1580 Philip became the ruler of an empire on which the sun never set. In 1580 Queen Elizabeth I could boast only one overseas possession, Ireland, a country that was in almost perpetual rebellion. But from this time the fortunes of these two monarchs changed. Contemporaries, of course, could not see this. Spain was the irresistible Goliath. England was the arrogant David whose overthrow could only be a matter of time. That is why the defeat of Philip II's great 'armada' (a huge fleet of warships) was an event as psychologically dynamic as it was historically significant.

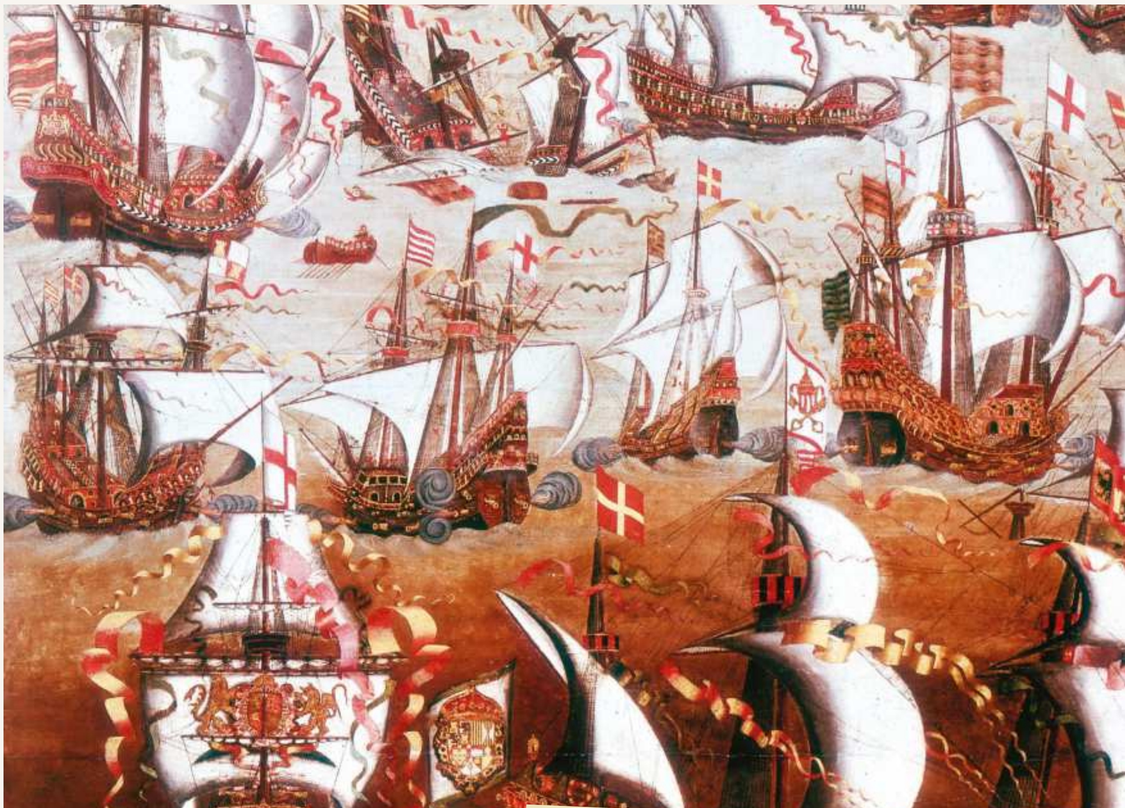
As well as his overseas territories in South and Central America and the Philippines, Philip had inherited from his father, the Emperor Charles V, a string of European possessions from southern Italy and the western Mediterranean islands to the Spanish Netherlands. He had also inherited war - an intermittent territorial conflict with France and a naggingly persistent struggle with some of his own subjects in the Netherlands. These Dutch rebels were driven by nationalism and religion. They doggedly fought to maintain their right to worship as Calvinists. Religion dominated Philip's political and military thinking. He did, indeed, believe himself called by God to 'unite Christendom under a single shepherd'. Everything in his world view pointed towards his destiny as the temporal champion who would bring all peoples to accept the Catholic faith and the spiritual leadership of the pope in Rome. Why else had his great-grandparents freed Spain from Muslim domination and set in motion the conquest of the New World? Why had his forebears sent missionaries to convert the natives of their growing empire? Why had they cleared the Mediterranean of Muslim corsairs? Why had the precious metals of Central and South America poured fabulous riches into the Spanish treasury? Why had he been granted control of Portugal's Pacific empire and its lucrative orient trade? The answers all pointed in the same direction: the world was nearing its end, for the Bible insisted that Christ would return when all nations had been brought to acknowledge him. Hastening that happy day was Philip's vocation.

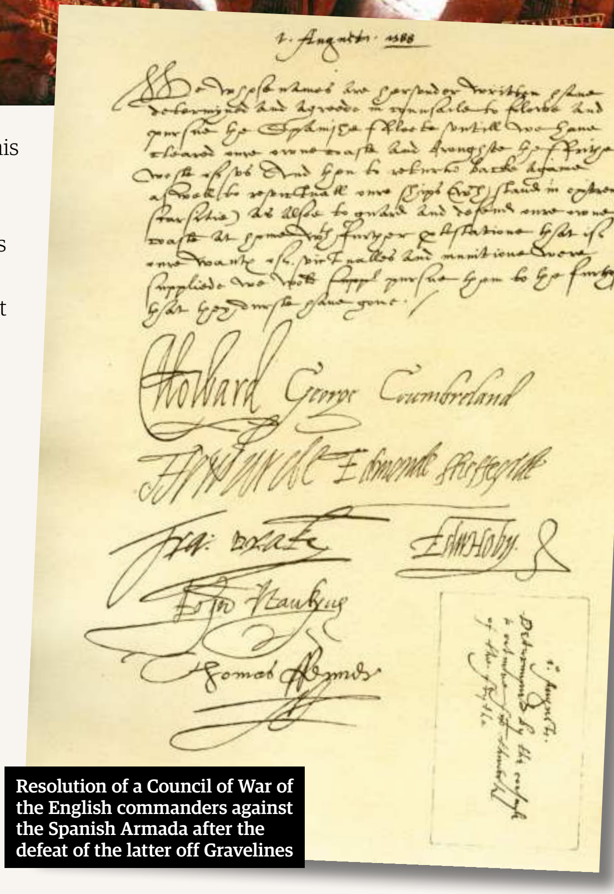
There were certain flies in the ointment. One was cash. Despite the fountains of gold and silver gushing from Peru and Mexico, Philip was over-extended and forced to borrow from Italian and German bankers. The pestilentially stubborn Hollanders were bleeding him dry. Then there was France, a Catholic power that had its own religious war to deal with but that could not be persuaded to allow him access to its armies in the fight against heresy. Finally, there was England.

England was a nuisance for several reasons. It had its own peculiar brand of Protestantism and was in sympathy with the Dutch rebels. It lay athwart the sea route for Philip's armies and supplies to the Netherlands. Back in the 1550s Philip had won this island kingdom for the Catholic crusade by marrying its queen, Mary Tudor. With his help she had halted the country's slide into heresy and he had recruited English troops for his wars. But in 1558 Mary had died childless, yielding the throne to her Protestant half-sister. Resolved to make whatever personal sacrifice was necessary, Philip had offered Elizabeth his own hand in marriage, only to have it rejected. Since then England's queen had played a canny hand. Outwardly she was neutral but she gave refuge to thousands of rebels fleeing from the Netherlands and, more annoyingly, she actively supported piratical attacks on his American settlements and the homeward-bound ships bringing their precious cargoes to Seville.

Tension mounted over the years. Philip resorted to covert tactics to rid himself of this troublesome woman. He supported Catholic plots on Elizabeth's life and allowed his diplomats to encourage acts of rebellion. Cool relations slowly morphed into cold war. When Elizabeth removed her ambassador to the Spanish court, normal diplomatic relations ceased. In 1568, Mary, Queen of Scots (who was a Catholic with a claim to the English crown) fleeing from enemies among her own people, sought refuge south of the border. Thereafter she was a virtual prisoner in England - and a focus of new plots against Elizabeth. Philip was by now receiving frequent entreaties from Rome to invade England and, in 1570, in order to get things moving, Pope Pius V excommunicated Elizabeth and absolved her subjects from their obedience. It was about this time that the 'Enterprise of England' became a topic of frequent discussion between Philip and his advisers. In his more bullish moments the king's will was buttressed by his confidence in his divine mission, as he assured the Duke of Alba, his Governor of the Netherlands: "Even though human prudence suggests many inconveniences and difficulties, and places before us worldly fears, Christian certitude and the confidence that we must justly have in the cause of God will remove them and inspire and strengthen us to overcome them. Certainly we could not avoid remaining with great guilt in our soul and great regret, if because I failed that queen (Mary) and those Catholics - or, rather, the faith - they suffered and she was lost."

Yet still he made no irreversible move. 'Human prudence' certainly counselled against open war. Even a successful invasion plan would cost Spain plenty in ships, men and materiel. And, indeed, there might not be any need for such a costly enterprise. Elizabeth was an unmarried monarch. The Catholic reconquest could wait for her death. Then Mary could be placed on the English throne - with Spanish support if necessary.





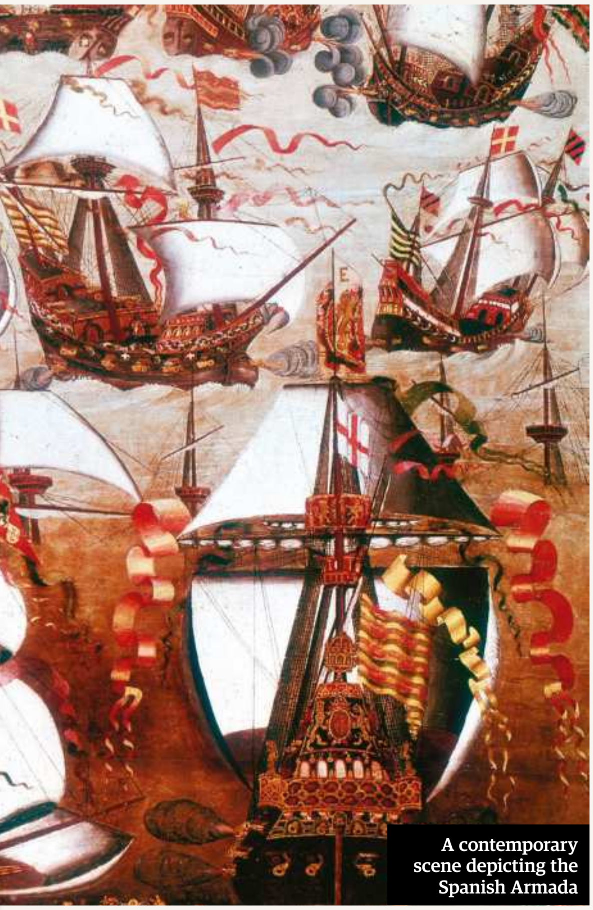
1 Augusti 1588

We whose names are hereunder written haue
determined and agreede in counsaile to followe and
pursue the Spanishe fleete untill we haue
cleared our owne coaste and broughte the Frithe
weste of us And then to returne backe againe
aswell to revictuall our Shippes (which stand in extreame
scarsitie) as alsoe to guard and defend our owne
coaste at home with further protestatione that if
our wantes of victualles and munitione were
supplied we wold pursue them to the furthest
that they durste haue gone.

C Howard George Cumberland
T Howard Edmond Sheffeild
Fra: Drake Edw Hoby
John Hawkyns
Thomas Fenner

Resolution of a Council of War of the English commanders against the Spanish Armada after the defeat of the latter off Gravelines

> "Pope Pius V excommunicated Elizabeth and absolved her subjects from their obedience"



A contemporary scene depicting the Spanish Armada

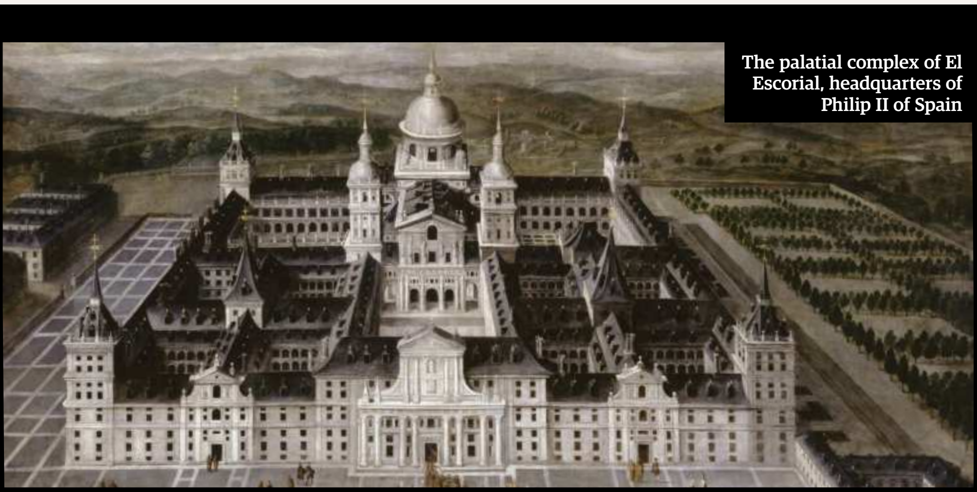
Elizabeth, too, was anxious to avoid war at all costs, and for much the same reason - money. Several of her councillors urged a more positive stance. They pointed out how vulnerable the realm was as long as she refused to marry. They warned what would happen if Philip's activities in the Netherlands were not checked: once he had suppressed the rebels there, his next target would be England. Year-in and year-out Elizabeth staved off these arguments. As well as the expense of war, she was passionately opposed to aiding rebels against their lawful sovereign. She believed firmly in the sanctity of anointed kingship. For the same reason she was appalled at the idea of 'dealing with' the Queen of Scots. Her advisers urged her to order Mary's execution for aiding plots, but Elizabeth dug her heels in.

Yet she did not refrain from irritating Philip in other ways. As well as profiting financially from piratical raids on Spanish ships and coastal towns, she allowed English troops to enlist with the Dutch freedom fighters and she supported Dom Antonio of Avis, a pretender to the Portuguese crown. In 1584 the last diplomatic link between the two courts was broken when Elizabeth expelled the Spanish ambassador, Bernardino de Mendoza, for involvement in a Catholic plot. It might seem that the queen was deliberately provoking Philip into a declaration of war. That was certainly the objective of her more forthright councillors, who were by 1585 in the majority. Elizabeth, as was her wont, was in two minds and for the time being, concentrating on strengthening the nation's defences. As late as the summer of 1585 it could still be said that neither monarch wanted open war and neither could afford it. But their interests were so diametrically opposed that a clash could not be avoided. In December, Elizabeth yielded to an appeal from the Dutch rebels to take their country under her protection. She sent over her close friend, the Earl of Leicester, with fresh forces and a mandate to act as Governor General. By the following spring it was known in London, through interception of secret correspondence, that Mary Stuart had named Philip as her heir to the thrones of England and Scotland. In October the Queen of Scots was put on trial and found guilty of high treason. Sentence was duly passed. Only Elizabeth's signed mandate was needed for the execution to be carried out. She procrastinated, she squirmed, she agonised and not until February 1587 could she bring herself to issue the fatal warrant. Mary was the queen in Philip's diplomatic hand. Her death trumped it. If England was to be restored to papal obedience he only had one card to play - the invasion ace.

The amphibious attack through the treacherous waters of the Channel on a well-fortified island,

King Philip's lonely eyrie

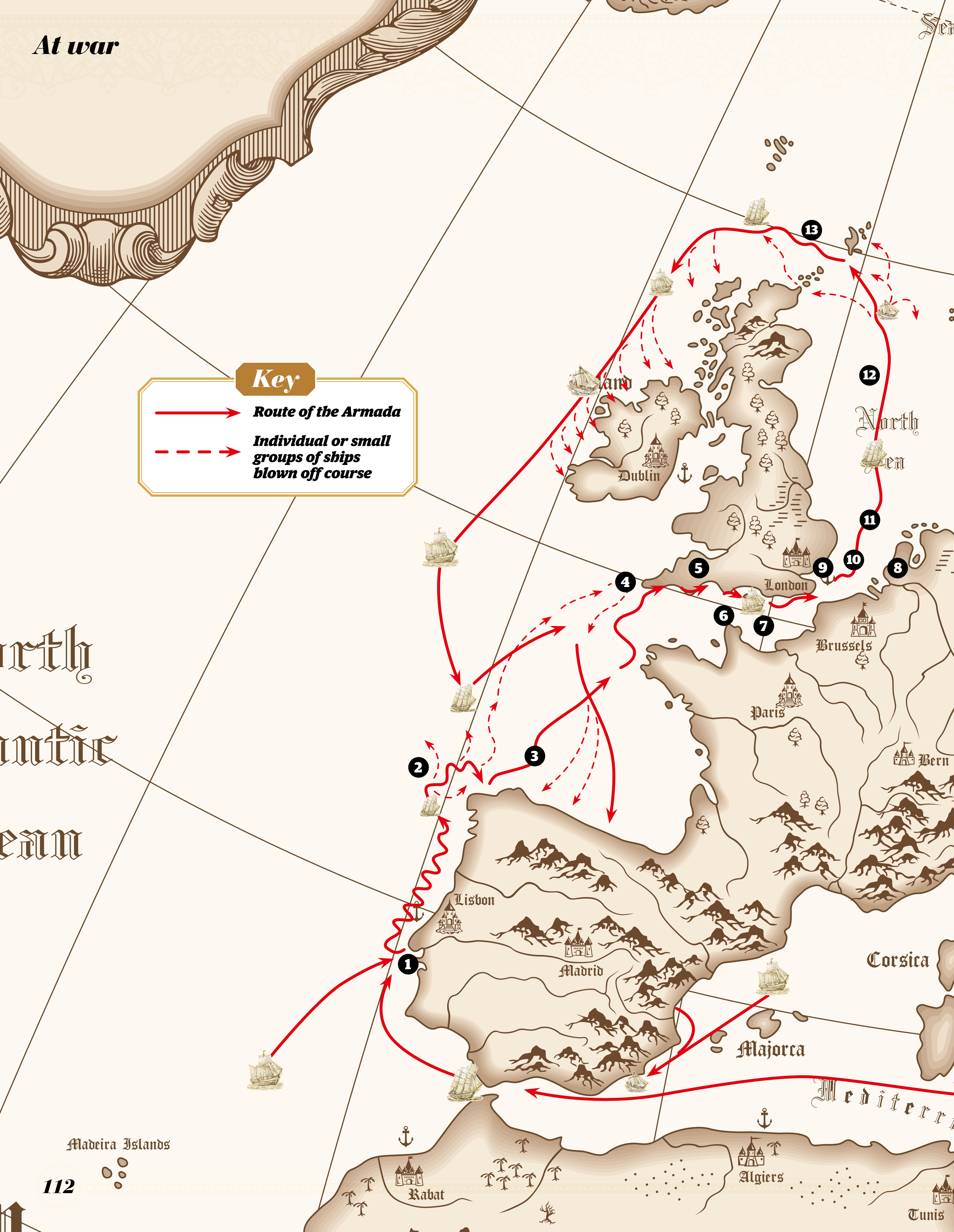
Philip II ruled the world's largest empire from the world's most remote centre of operations - and that added to the Armada's failure



The palatial complex of El Escorial, headquarters of Philip II of Spain

Philip was a control freak. What made his job more difficult was that he was a pious control freak. Ruling his world-ranging empire would have been difficult enough but his belief in his divine mission meant that he had to personally micro-manage every aspect of policy. For this he needed a residence which was not only a palace and a complex of government offices; it was also a house of prayer. He began the building of El Escorial in 1563 and completed it in 1584. At its heart was a great basilica modelled on the temple of Solomon described in the Bible. It was served by a community of monks who surrounded the king's labours with prayer. From his private quarters he was able to look down at the high altar of the church and take part in the cycle of monastic worship. To aid his devotions he accumulated a large collection of religious statuary and over 7,000 holy relics. With these sacred images ever before his eyes and the chanting of the monks in his ears, he contrived to be as close to heaven as a ruler with a multitude of responsibilities could be.

The problem with all this was that, as a military strategist overseeing the invasion of England, he was too heavenly-minded to be any earthly use. Had he travelled with the Armada or located himself near the centre of operations, he would have been able to respond to such changing circumstances as weather conditions and he would have been close to the leaders of his naval and land forces. Whether the Enterprise of England would have been a success if Philip had been closer to the action it is impossible to say. What is clear is that issuing inflexible orders from his remote headquarters and having to wait days or weeks for news about the progress of the Armada was, from a practical point of view, the worst of all worlds. In his grandiose and beautiful refuge he was shielded from reality.


Key
Route of the Armada
Individual or small groups of ships blown off course
Sea
13
12
North Sea
and
Dublin
11
10
9
8
5
4
London
6
7
Brussels
Paris
Bern
rth
ntic
ean
3
2
1
Lisbon
Madrid
Corsica
Majorca
Mediterr
Algiers
Rabat
Tunis
Madeira Islands

White Sea
Oslo
Berlin
Prague
Vienna
Roma
Sardinia
Volgograd
Crete
Cyprus
Malta

The Armada in action

Between July and August 1588, a confident Spanish fleet found itself annihilated by bad weather and a formidable foe

1 30 May

Numbering 128 ships, the Armada leaves Lisbon in adverse weather.

2 14 June

Awaiting supplies, the Armada halts off the coast of Corunna. 40 of the ships enter the harbour, while the remaining ships are due to follow the next day. However, a violent storm ravages the waiting ships, and the fleet are scattered, with some ships reaching the Scilly Islands off the coast of Cornwall, England.

3 21 July

As reinforcements and supplies arrive, the reformed fleet, now numbering 131 ships, begins their journey towards England.

4 29 July

Spanish ships heading towards England are spotted by an English ship. All along the south coast, fire beacons are lit as a warning of the impending Armada.

5 30 July

With the Spanish forces having reached Plymouth, 54 English ships sail out of the harbour at night to surprise the enemy forces. The wind gives the English feet unparallelled speed, and more ships join the English fleet later on.

6 31 July

A skirmish erupts, with the English attacking the Spanish fleet.

7 2-4 August

Once again, the English forces attack their Spanish enemies. The Spanish attempt to get closer to the English ships to board and engage in hand-to-hand combat, but the English are faster and their cannons can shoot further than the Spanish cannons.

8 5 August

The Spanish fleet sends word to the Duke of Parma in the Spanish Netherlands to join the Armada at Dunkirk. However, the Dutch and English have barricaded the coast.

9 6 August

Both the Spanish and English fleets anchor off the coast of Calais. Later, reinforcements arrive for the English forces, bringing their fleet up to an intimidating 230 ships.

10 7 August

The English forces pack their old ships full of flammable things, set fire of them, and drift them towards the Spanish forces. The Spanish cut their anchors and attempt to flee the fire.

11 8 August

As the sun rises after the fire attacks of the night before, the Spanish fleet is scattered over several miles of ocean. The English continue to attack and as the wind remains unfavourable to the Spanish, they decide to return home via Scotland.

12 12 August

Having followed the Spanish fleet at a distance, the English, lacking provisions, decide to return to their home ports.

13 Mid-August

As the Spanish return home via Scotland, they face even more bitter and brutal storms around the Orkney Islands and the Outer Hebrides. Only 55 ships eventually returned to Spanish ports in September.

with its own excellent navy called for a prodigious combined naval and military force, precision planning, good weather and luck. Philip possessed the resources and was able to amass from his Mediterranean bases, the New World Spanish and Portuguese ports, and the vessels based in home waters, the biggest invasion fleet ever seen on Europe's coasts. Beginning in the spring of 1587 the various contingents converged on Cadiz and Lisbon to be fitted out and provisioned. But the English did not sit back and wait. Drake set out with an Anglo-Dutch force of 25 ships to create as much havoc as possible. On 29 April the allied vessels entered Cadiz harbour and, for 36 hours, subjected the town and the ships at anchor to a ferocious bombardment. They destroyed some 30 or so ships and captured four others laden with vital supplies, before proceeding along the coast and attacking whatever enemy vessels they could find, including fishing boats. This was a propaganda coup as well as a successful naval engagement. Drake's exploit was soon being reported around Europe as the 'singeing of the King of Spain's beard'. The Cadiz raid and others on the coast and the Atlantic approaches hampered Philip's preparations because his captains had to divide their resources between preparation for the invasion and protecting themselves from attack.

Now the planning vital to the success of the expedition began to falter. Plan A had been for the Armada to gain control of the Channel, rendezvous with a contingent of troops gathered by the Duke of Parma in the Netherlands and transport them across to the English coast. Now Philip, considering the time that would be consumed protecting his ships, ordered a change of tactics. Parma was to attack first while the fleet created a diversion. Parma pointed out that he did not have enough transports to go it alone. Philip overruled him, demanding that he prepare for immediate invasion. Resignedly, the governor complied. Then, the Armada was beset with disease and storm damage, and was unable to set out. So it was back to Plan A again. Parma was ordered on no account to embark his troops until the fleet from Spain had arrived. This confusion had two results: it frittered away money and it hardened the king's resolve. The Armada was not ready to leave Lisbon until the end of May 1588. By this time Philip was listening to no advice. From his lonely palace/monastery complex of the Escorial in the high sierra, 63 kilometres from Madrid, instructions took weeks to reach the expedition leaders. Messages from his captains took just as long. The commanders of the expedition, Parma and the Armada admiral, the Duke of Medina-Sidonia, needed flexibility to respond to rapidly changing situations but they did not dare to change the invasion plan. It would not be true to say that the Armada was doomed from the start, but it could only succeed if there were no more hitches.

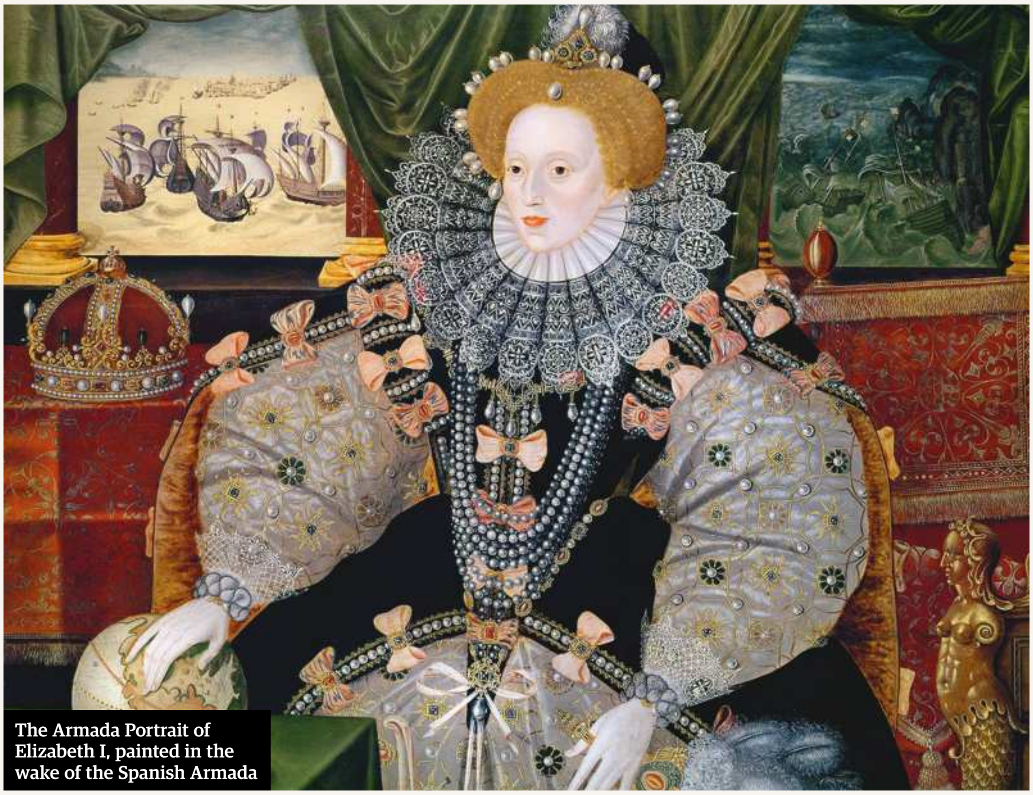
> "This was a propaganda coup as well as a successful naval engagement"

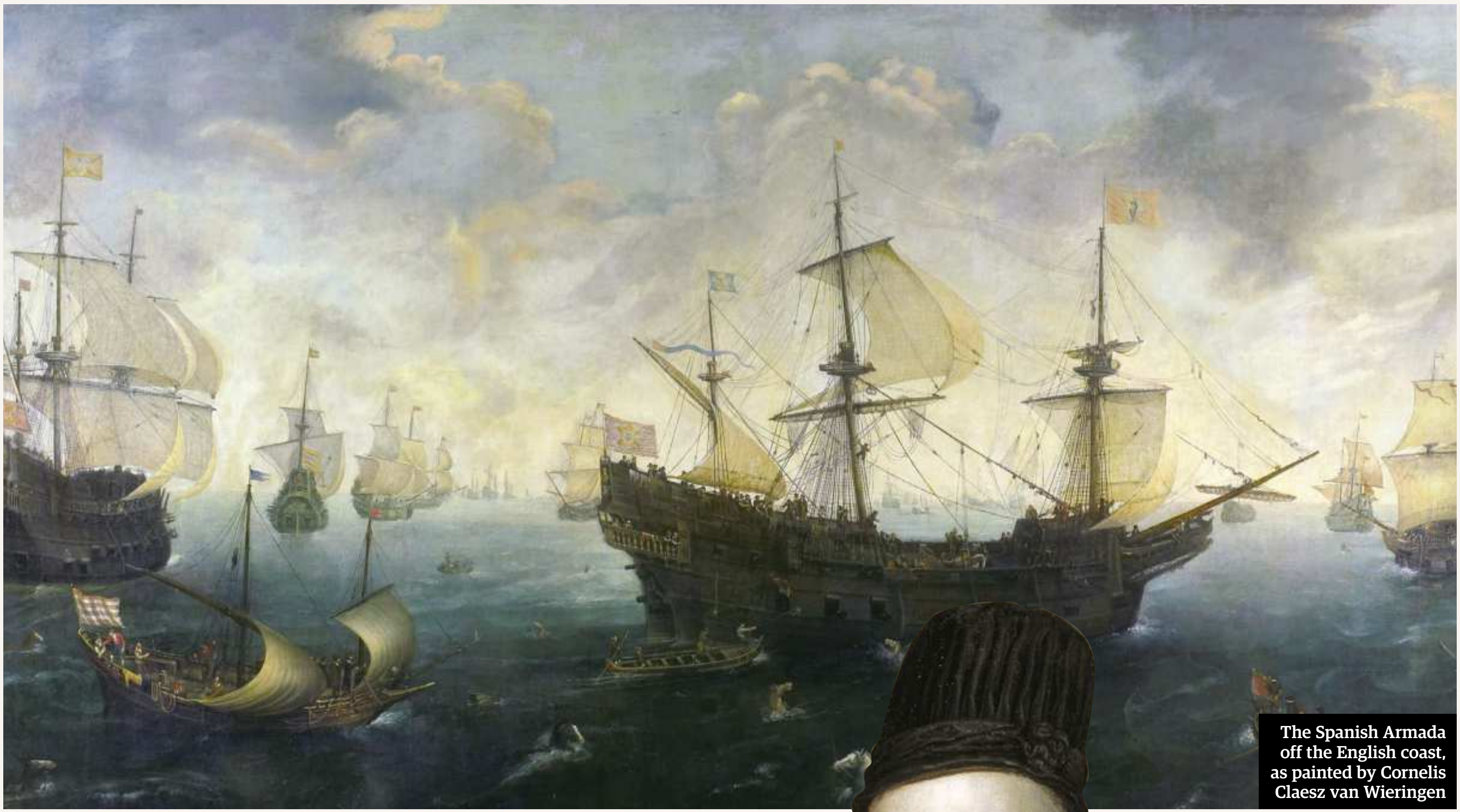
The hitches began immediately. Medina-Sidonia reached Corunna on 14 June with 128 ships and about 30,000 men. Here he intended to replenish his victuals and make necessary last-minute repairs before crossing the Bay of Biscay. The weather gods had other ideas. Violent gales drove many ships out into the Atlantic and it was 21 July before the fleet was able to regroup. Three more vessels had joined the fleet but casualties, disease and desertions had deprived the admiral of 5,000 men.

After ten days the Armada was in the Channel. Now the invaders had their first sight of the enemy. Between 50 and 60 English ships, faster and better-armed than the Spaniards, left Plymouth and offered fight. Medina-Sidonia declined to make response. His orders were to link up with Parma in the Pas de Calais and he refused to be deflected. As far as possible he kept his fleet together in a tight crescent formation and sailed steadily eastwards. He was reasonably successful, losing only two capital ships, the Neustra Señora del Rosario and the San Salvador, to enemy action on 30 July. For their part the English were unable to inflict as much damage as they would have wished, because their powder and shot were running low. There was further skirmishing on 3-4 August, by which time the combatant fleets were off the Isle of Wight. If the Spanish admiral had wanted to change the invasion plan and launch his attack elsewhere, then this was his last chance. If he had been in receipt of up-to-date information from Parma, then he might have adopted this option. Crucially, he did not have this information.

The governor, with excellent managerial skill, had assembled a land force of some 27,000 men in Dunkirk and Nieuwpoort and had ships and barges ready for the link-ups. But he was hampered by two problems. Like Medina-Sidonia he lacked information. Not until the very last moment was he aware that the Armada was approaching the rendezvous point. His other obstacle was the English and Dutch ships patrolling the coast. He needed the Spanish fleet to gain control of the Narrows before he could venture out with his troops, most of whom would be conveyed in shallow-draft barges.

On 6 August the Armada anchored about three miles off Calais. The English fleet came to a halt nearby. The stalemate did not last long. On the night of 7 August, the Spanish lookouts were terrified to observe flaming little ships bearing down on them in the darkness – hellburners! These terrifying vessels – packed with flammable


The Armada Portrait of Elizabeth I, painted in the wake of the Spanish Armada

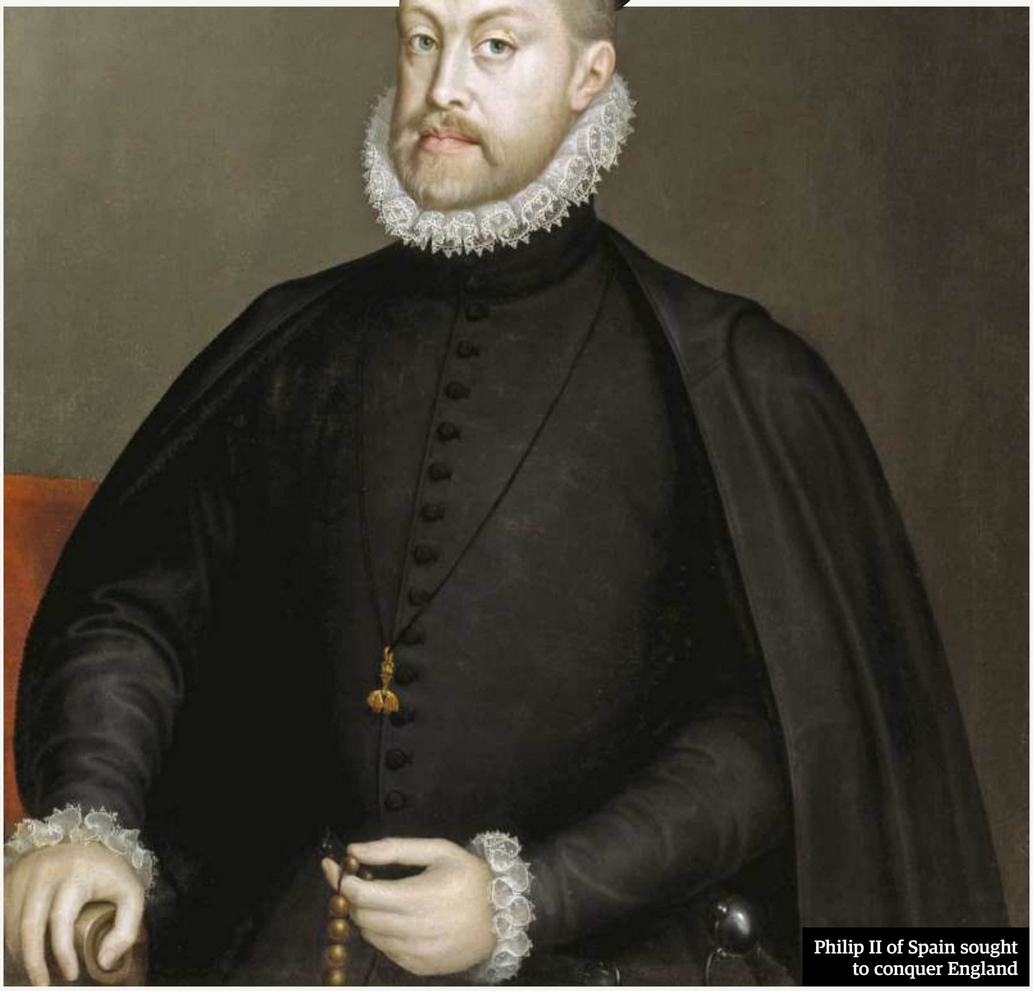


The Spanish Armada off the English coast, as painted by Cornelis Claesz van Wieringen

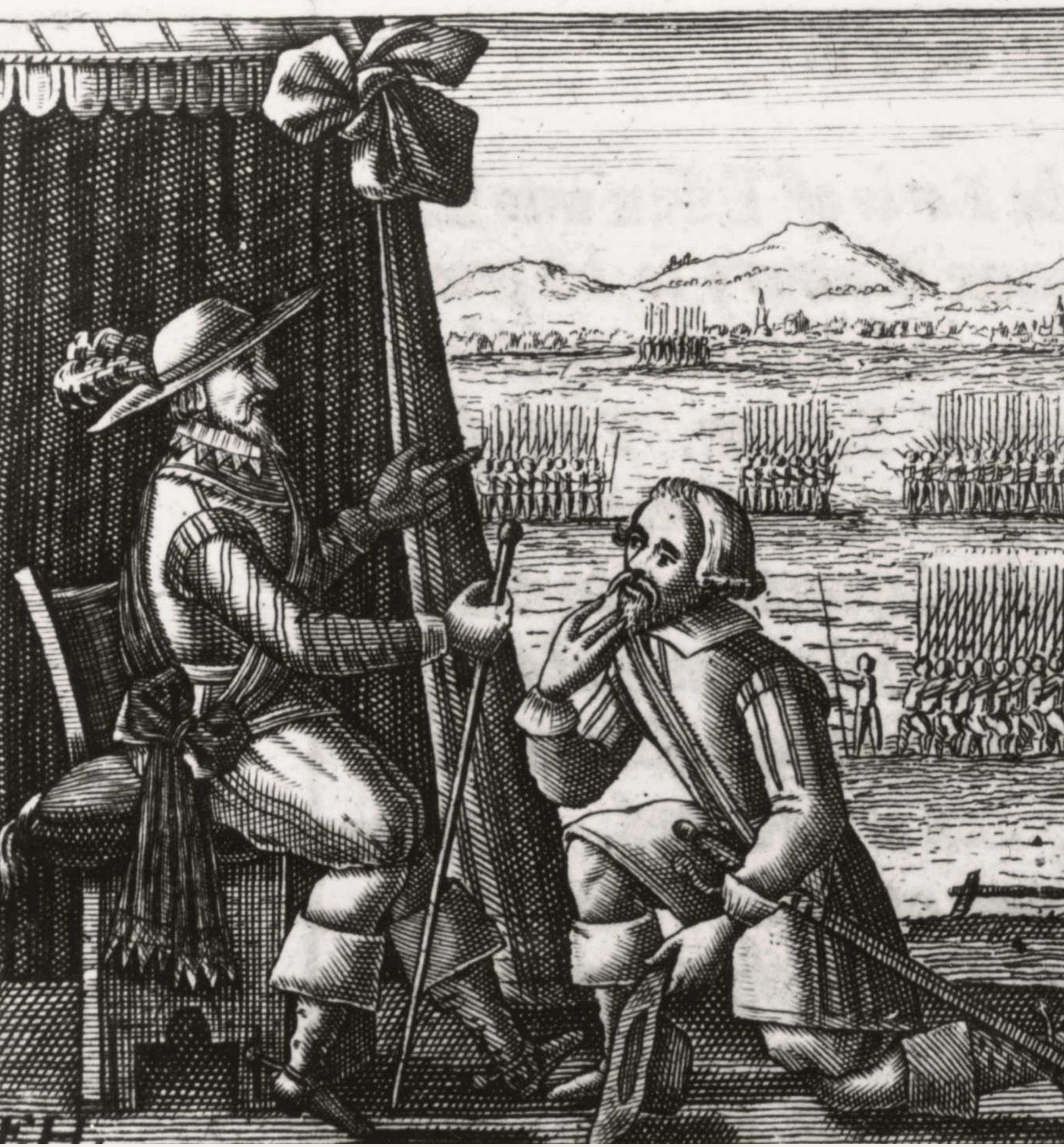
material and gunpowder - had been used to great effect by the Dutch in their war with Spain and were mightily feared. The Spanish captains slipped their anchors and scattered in all directions. Several went aground. Now the English fleet moved in for the kill. Battles raged throughout the next day until a freshening breeze enabled what was left of the Armada to escape northwards.

Still all was not lost. If Medina-Sidonia could have led his fleet into one of the Spanish-controlled Netherlands' ports it would have lived to fight another day. Once again, the weather played him false. Contrary winds forced the remnant of the Armada out into the open North Sea. For four days the English fleet shadowed the enemy before returning home and leaving wind and wave to do their work for them. Over the next six harrowing weeks the remnants of the Armada sailed northwards around Scotland and Ireland. Some were lost at sea. Some sought refuge in Scottish and Irish ports where many were roughly handled by the natives. Eventually between 55 and 65 ships successfully reached various Spanish ports. Of the 30,000 men who set out less than a third saw their homes again.

Did this end the Anglo-Spanish War? No, not until the accession of James VI was peace made between the two nations. Did Philip change his attitude? No, he remained convinced of his divine calling until his death in 1598.



Philip II of Spain sought to conquer England



"Tamed with swords, not words"

The tribulations of Elizabethan Ireland

There was disgruntlement aplenty at both ends of the Elizabethan religious spectrum. For very different reasons, Catholics and radical Protestants denounced the settlement, and they were not slow to express their disdain or take dramatic action...

Written by Jon Wright

Elizabethan Englishmen had a habit of describing their Irish contemporaries in the most unflattering terms. For the poet Edmund Spenser, they were "altogether stubborn and untamed," while the prolific pamphleteer John Derricke reviled the inhabitants of "that most barbarous nation" as "a people sprung from swine." The Irish were routinely depicted as wild, uncultured and alien. According to William Camden, when a party of them came to London in 1561 on diplomatic business, all eyes were on their "shaggy lace" garments, their "ash-coloured hanging curls," and shirts that were the "colour of infected human urine." Members of the English court perused them "with as much wonderment as if they had come from China or America."

The prejudices ran deep, but Tudor England could never countenance loosening its political grip on Ireland. This was, in part, a matter of pride and reputation - English monarchs had been claiming lordship over Ireland since the 12th century - but also a vital strategic issue. An independent Ireland might provide a launchpad for invasion by England's enemies, or even be captured by a particularly venturesome king of France or Spain. It cost a fortune to sustain a semblance of English authority - far more than the island ever provided in revenue - but this, so it seemed, was a price worth paying.

Throughout the era, English power was centred on Dublin and the nearby counties of Meath, Kildare, Westmeath and Louth, which made up the so-called Pale. Other urban centres, including Drogheda, Wexford, Waterford, Cork and Limerick, usually remained faithful to the crown. Beyond these enclaves, the earls of Ormond, Desmond and Kildare (descendants of medieval Anglo-Norman conquerors) dominated much of central and southern Ireland, with the Burke earls of Clanrickard emerging as the major power in Galway. These earldoms were notionally loyal to the English monarch but, as Elizabeth would discover, their patience with royal policy had its limits. To the west and north, a complex tapestry of Gaelic chieftains looked askance at English intrusion when not indulging a penchant for internecine strife.

Under the early Tudors, it often seemed appropriate to rely on the grand magnates, chiefly the earls of Kildare, to act as royal deputies, although on occasion, more direct English rule was required: Edward Poynings in the 1490s and Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey, in the 1520s, fulfilled this role. Rebellion by the Kildares during the 1530s prompted a sea-change in Tudor policy. From now on, Englishmen would serve as governors in an Ireland that, after 1541, was formally expected to recognise the English monarch as its king.

By the time Elizabeth came to the throne, opinion within the English political elite was divided on an age-old conundrum: Was it wiser to rule through conciliation or coercion? As late as 1574, Elizabeth still maintained the fiction of wanting "to allure that rude and barbarous nation to civility rather by discreet handling than by force and shedding of blood," but this commitment was as often honoured in the breach as in the observance.

Various strands of English policy caused deep resentment in Ireland. Attempts were repeatedly made to intervene in disputes between warring clans and, as the reign progressed, new structures of government were erected: regional councils in Munster and Connacht from the late 1560s and, later, the arrival of provincial governors and agents.

“Key aspects of Gaelic culture came under attack: from the language to the law, and from the circulation of poetry to the way the Irish dressed”

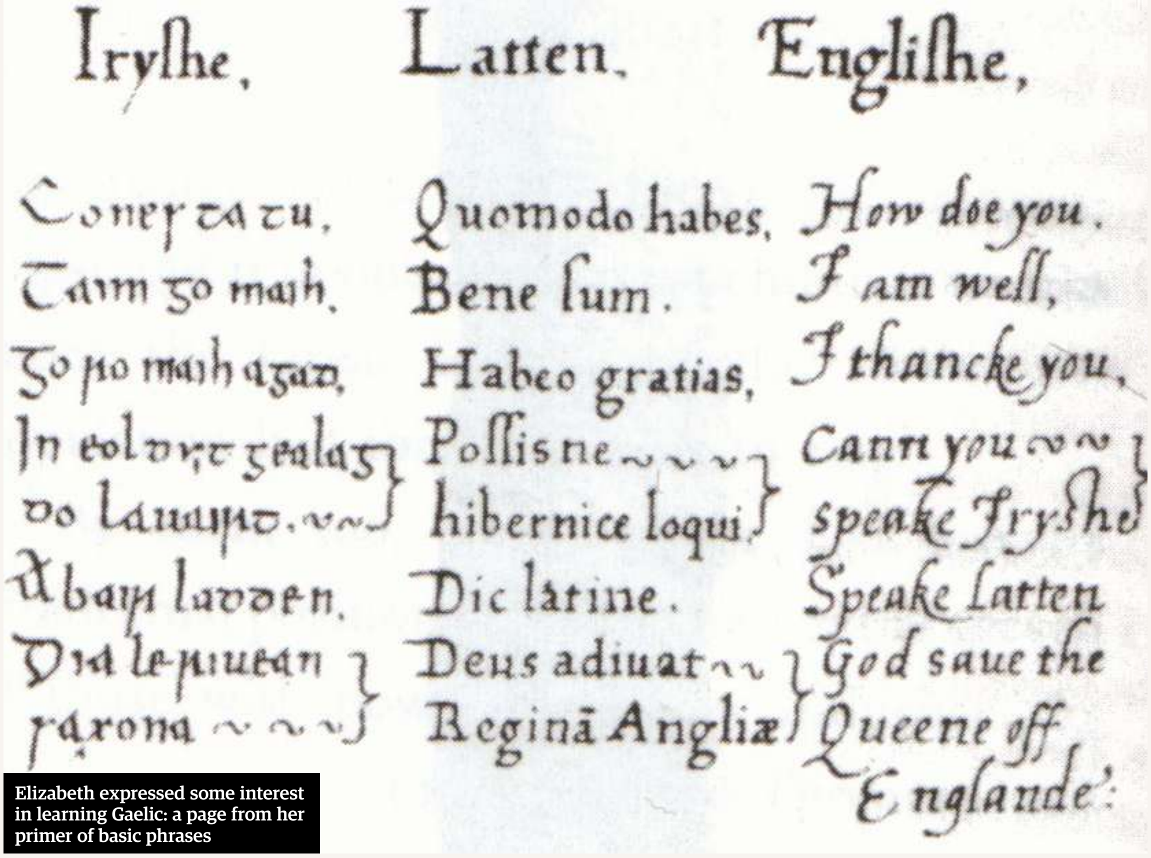
Novel methods of taxation undermined traditional levies and tributes, while key aspects of Gaelic culture came under attack: from the language to the law, and from the circulation of poetry to the way the Irish dressed. English concepts of primogeniture were privileged over traditional ways of electing clan leaders and, perhaps most dramatically, the English embarked upon a policy of plantation. If the Irish were not going to civilise themselves, as the rhetoric of the time insultingly put it, then perhaps it was time to import settlers who could lead the work of cultural regeneration. Such initiatives began in Leinster during the 1550s and continued in Antrim during the 1570s, Munster in the 1580s and, disastrously, across Ulster. An image of the English as thuggish intruders became firmly entrenched, and was often tied to disapproval of the enforcement of Protestant doctrines and devotions in a proudly Catholic land.

Worse yet, English governors regularly depended on the use of martial law when confronted by the chorus of disapproval. Summary executions and billeted troops became an all-too-familiar sight across Ireland and, in the 20 years after 1558, no fewer than 259 commissions for martial law were issued. Talk of English restraint and compromise counted for little in the face of the massacres that occurred with alarming regularity. In 1574, members of the O’Neill family arranged a meeting with English officials at Castlereagh Castle. The goal of the feast was to bring an end to years of discord, but the English took the opportunity to slaughter hundreds of guests. In 1575, 600 people, including many civilians and dozens of Scottish mercenaries, were killed on Rathlin Island. Later that year, the Earl of Essex proudly boasted of his savage repressions in Clandeboye: he had “left all the country desolate, and without people.”

English leaders rarely expressed regret for such outrages. Looking back on his activities as lord deputy of Ireland between 1580 and 1582, Arthur, Lord Grey of Wilton, carefully recorded that “the number of slain in these services of note comes to 1,485, not accounting those of meaner sort, neither executions by law, nor killing of churls, the account of which is beside number.” A culture of terror often held sway, and is epitomised by the severe policies of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, a key military leader in Ireland during the 1570s. If we are to trust the account of Thomas Churchyard, Gilbert simply refused to meet with anyone he suspected of rebellious proclivities, insisting that even “his dog’s ears” were “too good” for their deceitful words. Those who did secure a meeting with Gilbert were treated to chilling displays of English justice.

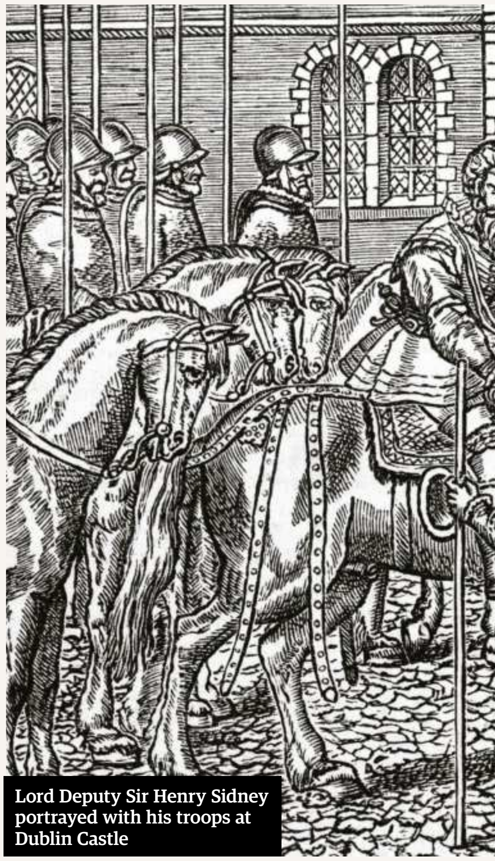
“His manner,” Churchyard reported, “was that the heads of all those … which were killed in the day should be cut off from their bodies and brought to the place where he encamped at night and should be there laid on the ground by each side of the way leading into his own tent.” This would “bring great terror to the people when they saw the heads of their dead fathers, brothers, children, kinsfolk and friends… as they came to speak with the said colonel.” Not that Churchyard objected to such tactics. Gilbert may have “killed man, woman and child… and spoiled, wasted and burned” the land, but “courteous dealing” with the Irish was pointless. The “stiff-necked must be made to stoop with extremity of justice and stout behaviour.”

Unsurprisingly, resistance to English incursions and excesses came thick and fast during Elizabeth’s reign and the shifting allegiances within Irish society made for a chaotic round of rebellions and uprisings. At times, rival clans and great Irish



Iryſhe,	Latten.	Engliſhe,
Conus ta tu.	Quomodo habes.	How doe you.
Taim go maih.	Bene ſum.	I am well,
Go ro maih agad.	Habeo gratias.	I thancke you.
In eol duit gaelag	Poſſis ne	Cann you
do lauairt.	hibernice loqui.	speake Iryshe
Abair laden.	Dic latine.	Speake Latten
Dia le riuean	Deus adiuat	God saue the
saxona	Reginā Angliæ	Queene off Englande:

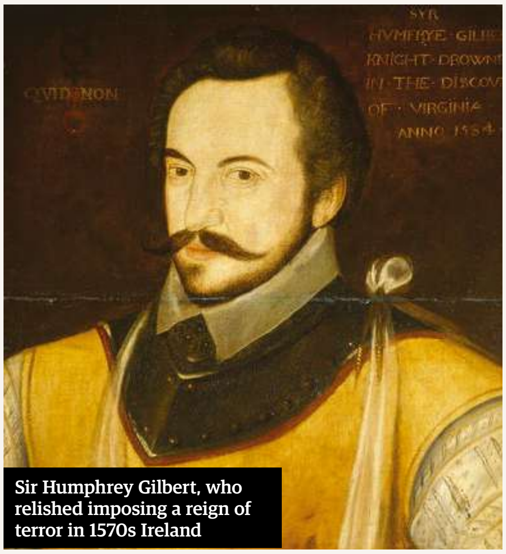
Elizabeth expressed some interest in learning Gaelic: a page from her primer of basic phrases



Lord Deputy Sir Henry Sidney portrayed with his troops at Dublin Castle dynasties would exploit the situation in order to strike against their local enemies; at other times they would find common cause against their English overlords. We should not suppose that every part of Ireland was in a constant state of conflict, but some of the major insurgencies posed serious and prolonged threats to civil order, leaving behind scarred landscapes, economic distress and heavy death tolls.

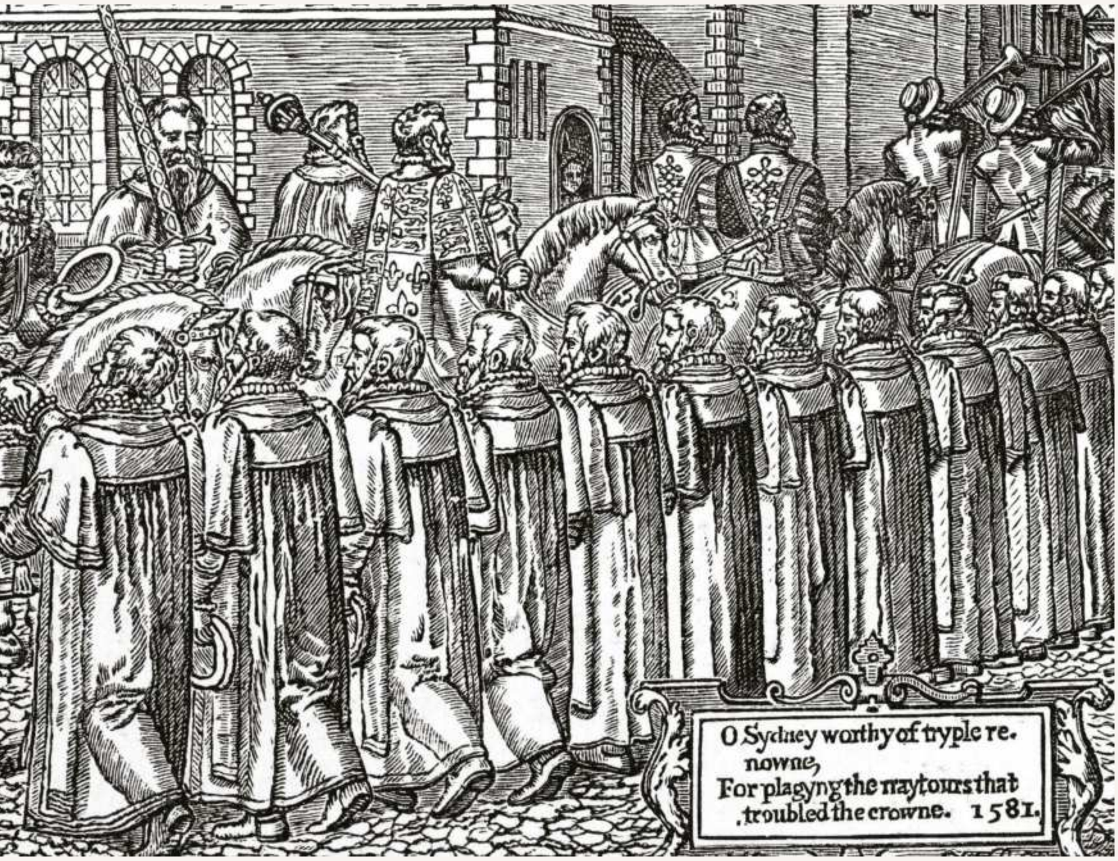
At the very start of Elizabeth's reign, the complex case of Shane O'Neill demonstrated just how muddled English policy could be. O'Neill regarded himself as the rightful ruler of Ulster and inheritor of the earldom of Tyrone, but Elizabeth's first lord deputy, the Earl of Sussex, simply didn't trust the man, and convinced the queen to renege on promises to confirm O'Neill's position.

Over the next seven years a bizarre political process unfolded. O'Neill travelled to court to plead his cause and submit to Elizabeth. When recognition of a compromise settlement was delayed, O'Neill attacked English garrisons. New agreements were hammered out, but then not ratified, so O'Neill once more went on the offensive. In 1565, the new lord deputy, Sir Henry Sidney, concluded that, by comparison with O'Neill, even "Lucifer was never puffed up with more pride nor ambition." O'Neill was now in open rebellion, and havoc reigned in Ulster and beyond until, in 1567, O'Neill was assassinated and his head sent to Dublin castle to be displayed on a pole.



Sir Humphrey Gilbert, who relished imposing a reign of terror in 1570s Ireland

Further south, the antics of the Fitzgerald earls of Desmond proved every bit as disruptive. Gerald FitzJames Fitzgerald, the 14th earl, cultivated a fierce rivalry with Thomas Butler, the 10th Earl of Ormond. The two men were asked to submit their various land and property claims to the queen, but Desmond was slow to comply and spent some time in custody during the early 1560s. The feud then reignited, with the Desmonds attacking Ormond territories and slaughtering cattle and tenants, and matters came to a head at a battle at the ford of Affane in 1565. After again being summoned to court, reconciliation was once more achieved but,

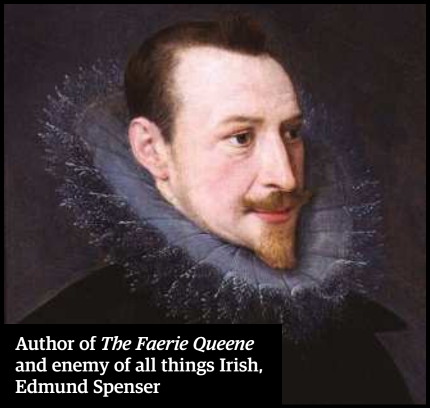

O Sydney worthy of tryple re.
nowne,
For plagyng the traytours that
troubled the crowne. 1581.

A poet's prejudices

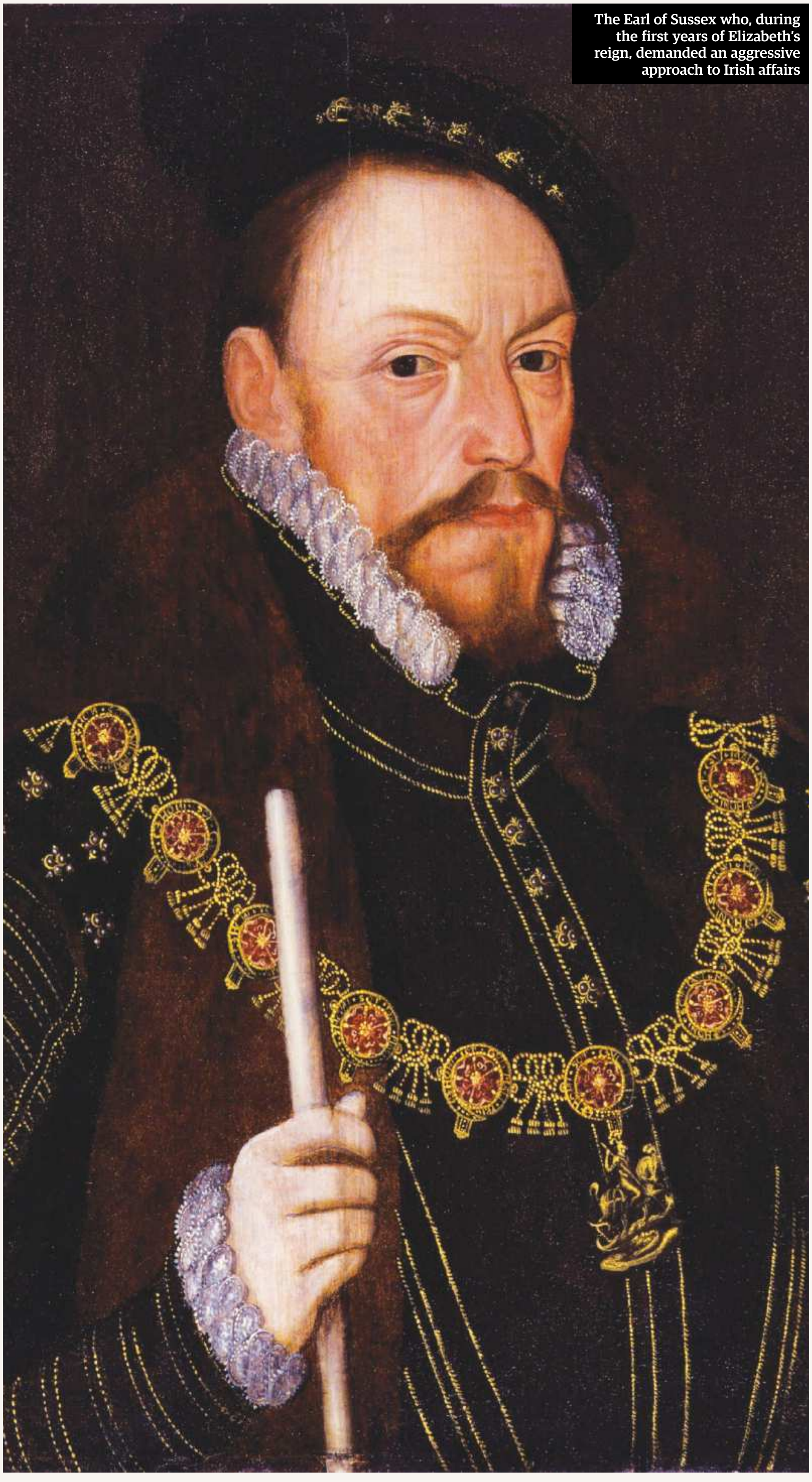
Edmund Spenser wrote some of his masterpieces in Ireland, but his opinion of the locals could scarcely have been more contemptuous

One of the titans of the Elizabethan literary scene, Edmund Spenser travelled to Ireland in 1580, pressed into service as the private secretary of the new governor, Arthur, Lord Grey of Wilton. It is likely that Spenser did not relish his unexpected appointment - he was out of favour at the time - and while he remained in Ireland for many years, his attitude towards the local population was unremittingly hostile.

Spenser took on various administrative roles following Grey's departure in 1582, acquired substantial lands and properties, and found time to compose his greatest work, *The Faerie Queene*. In a 1596 tract, *A View Of The Present State Of Ireland*, Spenser unleashed his bile. The Irish, he wrote, were "a people altogether stubborn and untamed," guided by haphazard laws, by customs that were "very strange and almost heathenish," and addicted to the superstitions of Catholicism. Ireland, he admitted, was "a most beautiful and sweet country as any is under heaven... seamed throughout with many goodly rivers", but the residents required discipline. They must be governed "by the sword, for all these evils must first be cut away with a strong hand... like as the corrupt branches are first to be pruned and the foul moss cleansed and scraped away before the tree can bring forth any good fruit."



Author of *The Faerie Queene* and enemy of all things Irish, Edmund Spenser



The Earl of Sussex who, during the first years of Elizabeth's reign, demanded an aggressive approach to Irish affairs

again, Sir Henry Sidney was prompted to more aggressive action: for him, Gerald Fitzgerald was "a man void of judgement and will to be ruled."

Fitzgerald soon found himself imprisoned at Dublin Castle and, from December 1567, in the Tower of London, where he was joined by his brother John. Into the power vacuum back in Ireland stepped James FitzMaurice Fitzgerald, who had no qualms about launching an open rebellion. His cause, which he portrayed as nothing less than a religious crusade against a heretic queen, won widespread support (even attracting, for a little while, some members of the rival Ormond family) through to 1573 when James submitted and departed for the continent. He would return in 1579, backed by Spanish and Italian troops and, when he was killed in a skirmish in August, leadership of the second Desmond rebellion passed first to John, and then Gerald Fitzgerald. The latter, who had been back in Ireland since 1573, was at first reluctant to assume the role of rebel, but he proved to be a particularly irksome thorn in the English side, successfully evading capture until November 1583. After the earl's death, his head was sent as a gruesome trophy to Elizabeth.

Munster had suffered terribly through these years. The scorched earth policy employed by the English forces had ravaged the landscape and, in the rebellion's wake, famine and disease descended. The local people, one visitor reported, were "anatomies of death, like ghosts out of their graves." By the end of the 1580s, perhaps a third of Munster's population had perished and the expansion of the English policy of plantation would do little to ease tensions in the years ahead.

By the 1590s, then, the Elizabethan regime appears to have reached the conclusion that a forceful, uncompromising approach to the governance of Ireland was mandatory. Taking sides in the various rivalries across the Irish sea had fuelled factional conflicts at the English court but, on balance, Elizabeth could at least claim to have contained the worst outbursts of Irish resistance. The final years of her reign had more shocks in store, however. Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone from 1585, tried very hard to remain loyal to the English crown. In spite of his territorial portfolio coming under siege, and even though he balked at the garrisoning of English troops, he continued to defend English interests down to the mid-1590s.

This did not prevent his enemies within the administration in Ireland pursuing a whispering campaign about his treasonous inclinations. Feeling defamed and undervalued, O'Neill reluctantly took the course of rebellion in 1595. Three years of fitful conflict ensued, but a mighty victory at the Yellow Ford on the Blackwater River in 1598 transformed O'Neill's attitudes. He now realised that other Irish rebels would rally to his cause, and that military aid might even be forthcoming from Spain.

In deep panic, the Elizabethan regime despatched over 17,000 troops to Ireland in 1599. Their leader, the Earl of Essex, made a hash of the subsequent campaign, and his failures would go a long way towards his subsequent fall from favour. By 1601, the future of English rule in Ireland was in jeopardy, and the arrival of 3,500 Spanish troops in County Cork hardly improved the situation. In the end, it all came down to one of the most important battles in Irish history. Under the new lord deputy, Charles Blount, Viscount Mountjoy, a large English army sent Irish troops scurrying and put the Spanish forces to the sword at Kinsale on Christmas Eve 1601.

O'Neill, still a threat, was treated generously. The Treaty of Mellifont obliged him to abandon his O'Neill title but he was allowed to retain the lands of his earldom. The treaty was signed on 30 March 1603. Elizabeth I had died six days earlier, and the new monarch, James VI and I, inherited a troubled Irish legacy. For now, the English presence in Ireland was secure, but bitter memories of the Elizabethan era would cast a long and destructive shadow.

Rathlin Island, site of a bloody massacre in 1575

The pirate queen of Mayo

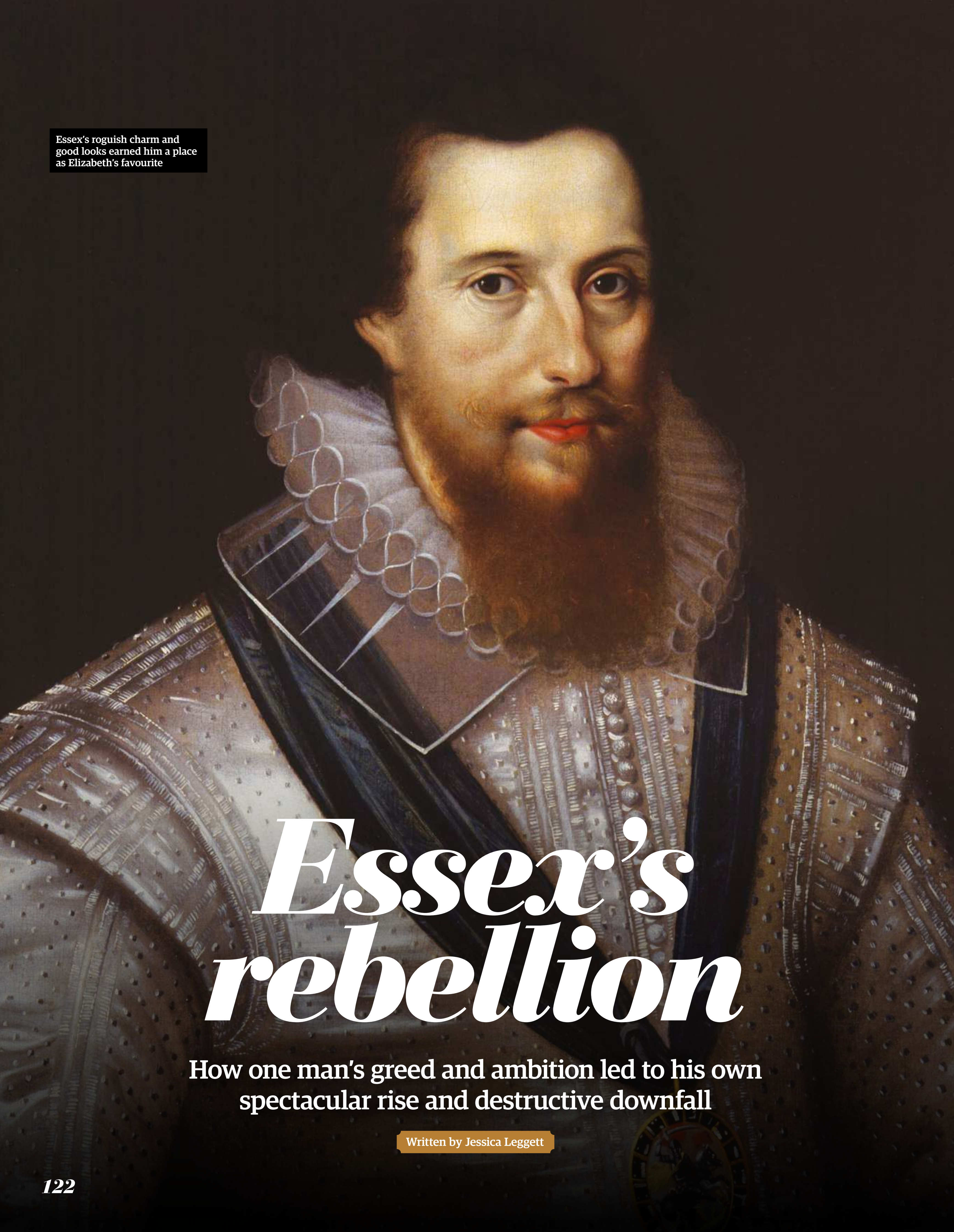
Ireland's conflicts had a ruinous impact, but for those living on the fringes of the law, they could sometimes be good for business

Rockfleet Castle, one of Grace O'Malley's strongholds and the likely site of her death

Born in or around 1530, Grace O'Malley achieved the impressive distinction of becoming a female leader of the O'Malley clan in the far west of Ireland. Much of her power and wealth derived from her skill as a pirate: attacking ships with her small fleet and demanding either bribes or cargo. Sir Henry Sidney would refer to her as "a notorious woman in all the coasts of Ireland."

O'Malley's attitude towards the English fluctuated according to political circumstances. In the late 1570s she was offering to lend ships and troops to aid the English cause. By the end of the 1580s she had been suspected of involvement with the Burke rebellions, mourned the death of one of her sons, and spent time in prison. The local ruler in Connacht, Sir Richard Bingham, was adamant that O'Malley had treacherous intentions, and plundered her lands. Greater crises arrived in the early 1590s. O'Malley's son, Theobald, had been placed under arrest, so Grace travelled to Elizabeth's court to plead his case. The two women met in 1593, conversing in Latin. Grace refused to bow, but her son's release was secured, and further negotiations resolved issues over land rights in the coming years.

Grace died at some point at the start of the 17th century from natural causes – quite a feat, given a life of such peril and misadventure.



Essex's roguish charm and good looks earned him a place as Elizabeth's favourite

Essex's rebellion

How one man's greed and ambition led to his own spectacular rise and destructive downfall

Written by Jessica Leggett

Essex's rebellion is arguably one of the biggest challenges Elizabeth faced during the last few years of her reign. Led by Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, it was hastily organised and destined for failure. But what caused Essex, Elizabeth's one-time favourite, to turn against his queen with such fatal consequences?

Tall, handsome and charismatic, it was no wonder that Essex charmed Queen Elizabeth following his arrival at court in 1584. He was well-connected, the son of the queen's second cousin, Lettice Knollys, as well as the stepson of Elizabeth's long-time favourite Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. After Dudley's death in 1588, Essex quickly became the queen's new favourite.

Young - barely in his 20s - he caught the attention of the ageing Elizabeth, who was over three decades his senior. As it turned out, Essex's arrival at the English court coincided with a period where a number of the queen's closest advisors, including Sir Francis Walsingham and Sir William Cecil, had passed away and therefore left her in a vulnerable and isolated position.

Essex's relationship with Elizabeth was tempestuous and fiery, and they fought frequently. Never one to back down, Essex would express his frustration with the queen in dramatic displays, often leaving the court to gain her attention. In one particular incident, Essex was said to have turned his back to the queen in anger - an act of disrespect. Elizabeth retaliated by boxing his ears, and in a moment of fury, Essex responded by half-drawing his sword at her.

Despite this shocking display, the queen forgave him and continued to bestow a number of lucrative appointments on Essex, allowing him to rise rapidly within the court - far quicker than any of her previous favourites had. He became involved in a number of military operations, and in 1593 he was made a member of the Privy Council. As he became more prominent, Essex developed a rivalry with Sir William Cecil's son and replacement, Robert Cecil, as well as with Sir Walter Raleigh, which created new power factions at court.

However, Essex was torn away from this game for power when - at his own instigation - Elizabeth named him the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1599. England was in the midst of the Nine Years' War against Ireland, where the Gaelic Irish chieftains were fighting against English rule. In April, Essex took a force of 17,000 men to Ireland to end the revolts led by the Earl of Tyrone, hoping to beat the Irish once and for all.

Yet, Essex failed to achieve a glorious victory as he frittered his money away and fought a series of pointless battles. After realising that his campaign was guaranteed to fail, Essex signed a truce with Earl, although the terms remain uncertain. It was a catastrophic error, as he had made the truce without the consent of the queen. Not only had his actions humiliated her, but they also questioned her authority. Furious with his disobedience, Elizabeth told Essex that he could not return to England without her approval, which she was not willing to give.

Just like that, Essex had fallen into disgrace, and his reputation was in tatters. In spite of this, he was determined to explain his behaviour to the queen, confident that he would regain her favour once again. His arrogance had to be seen to be believed, as he ignored Elizabeth's explicit orders to stay in Ireland, and instead made his way back to England.

As soon as he was back in the country, Essex immediately went to find the queen. His audacity knew no bounds, as on the morning of 28 September, he burst into Elizabeth's bedchamber at Nonsuch Palace. He caught the queen just as she was rising out of bed for the day, but after setting his eyes on her, Essex perhaps got more than he bargained for. He saw the real Elizabeth in just her nightclothes, without her iconic red wig and heavy make-up, a 66-year-old woman who was covered in smallpox scars with a balding head - a far cry from the eternally youthful image that she attempted to portray.

The queen was astounded by Essex's behaviour, but calmly listened to him as he told her his side of the story. Once he had finished she allowed him to leave, but after he had gone, Elizabeth made it clear that she would not tolerate his disobedience, and had Essex confined to his room. The next day he was interrogated for five hours by the Privy Council, who determined that Essex's excuses did not justify what he had done in Ireland.

Essex was subsequently placed under house arrest at York House, and following a second trial in June 1600, he was stripped of his offices. He sent desperate letters to Elizabeth and begged her for forgiveness, aware that he had now been politically ruined. In one such letter, Essex wrote to her that

> "Essex's relationship with Elizabeth was tempestuous and fiery, and they fought frequently"

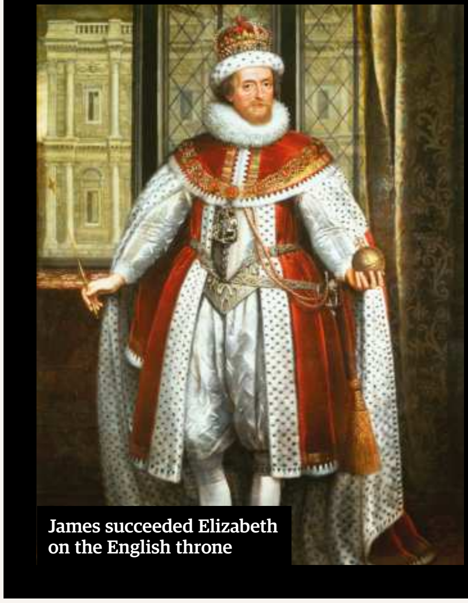
Covert dealings

Even before his all-out rebellion, Essex had been secretly plotting behind the queen's back

Essex's rebellion had been brewing for around two years ever since his disastrous expedition to Ireland. An ambitious man, he grew increasingly frustrated as he was denied the wealth and patronage that he had once enjoyed as the queen's favourite. Essex knew that if he was to regain his former standing, he would need powerful supporters, and so he began a secret correspondence with King James VI of Scotland during his confinement at York House.

Although Elizabeth had refused to name her heir, the obvious choice was James, her second cousin. Essex privately supported James's claim to the English throne, although what was discussed in their letters will never be known, as Essex burned all of them before his arrest. He had hoped that James would help him fight Cecil and his powerful faction, while the king wanted Essex to support his mission to be named as Elizabeth's successor.

Unfortunately, before James's ambassadors could meet Essex, he was beheaded. However, his death led to a new opportunity for Cecil, who began his own secret correspondence with the king just a month after Essex's execution. This partnership was far more successful, and Cecil ended up as James's right-hand man during the first few years of his reign in England.



James succeeded Elizabeth on the English throne regardless of what she would decide, "I shall live and die your humble vassal."

His grovelling and flattery must have struck a chord with the queen, as by August 1600, he was given permission to move freely again. However, Elizabeth had not forgotten about how her impetuous favourite had broken her trust. Essex may have gained his freedom, but he was still banned from returning to court.

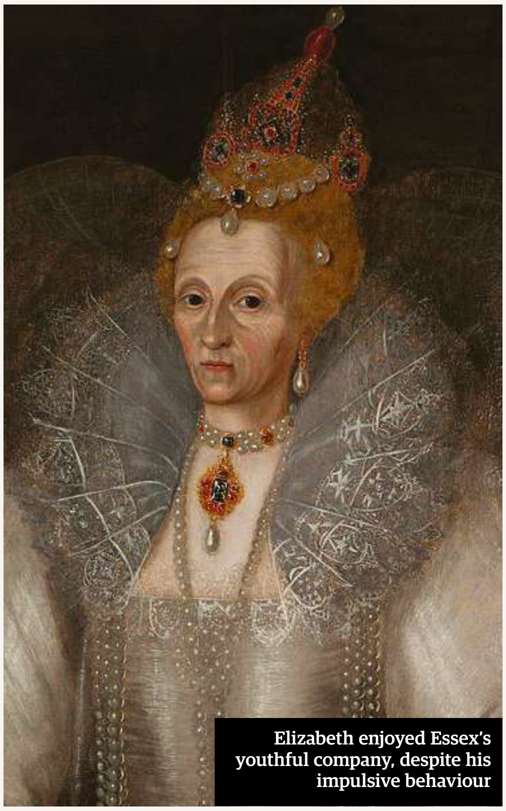
A month later, Essex was hit with the news that the queen would not be renewing his monopoly on sweet wine. Granted to him after Dudley's death, it was his most essential source of income. Without it, Essex faced complete and utter financial ruin. This was the final straw for Essex, after losing all of his power and status at the royal court. Now, in his mind, he had nothing left to lose.

Tension had been building between Essex and the court ever since his disastrous command in Ireland, and now it had finally reached its breaking point. Essex refused to accept his fall from grace, and began to plot a rebellion at his home, Essex House. Luckily for him, he had a few supporters, including the Earl of Southampton, Sir Charles Danvers and Sir Christopher Blount, his stepfather.

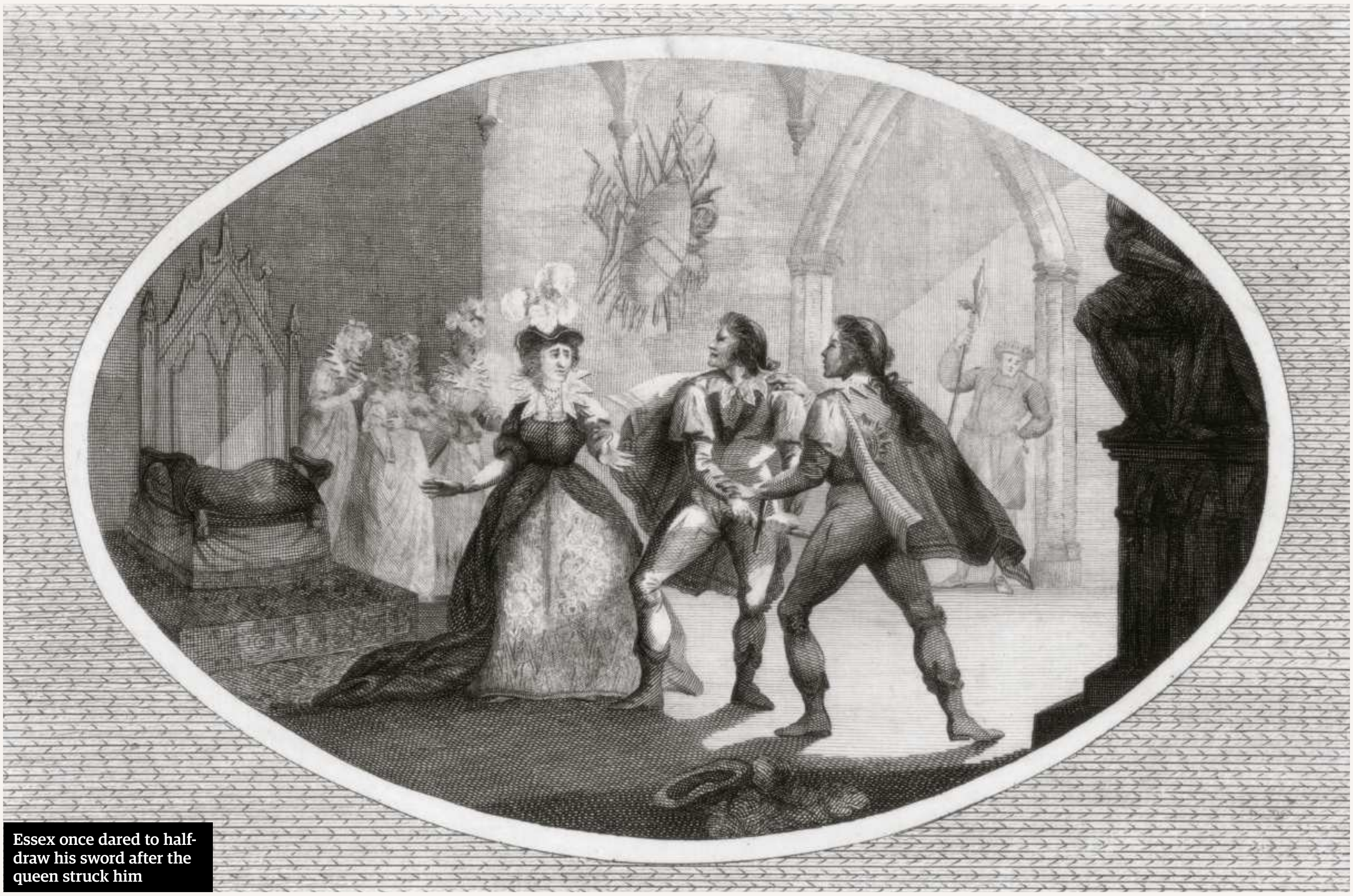
For some time, there had been a growing frustration over the power and influence of Robert Cecil and his faction at court. While Essex had built his own faction, the most powerful positions still belonged to Cecil and his men. Essex and his conspirators were determined to change this once for all.

By February 1601, the rebellious plot had really started to heat up. On the 3rd, the ringleaders met up to discuss their plot, although Essex stayed away, fearing that his presence would draw attention to the meeting and arouse suspicion. They planned to find the queen in the privy chamber at Whitehall and force her to remove Cecil and his men from government.

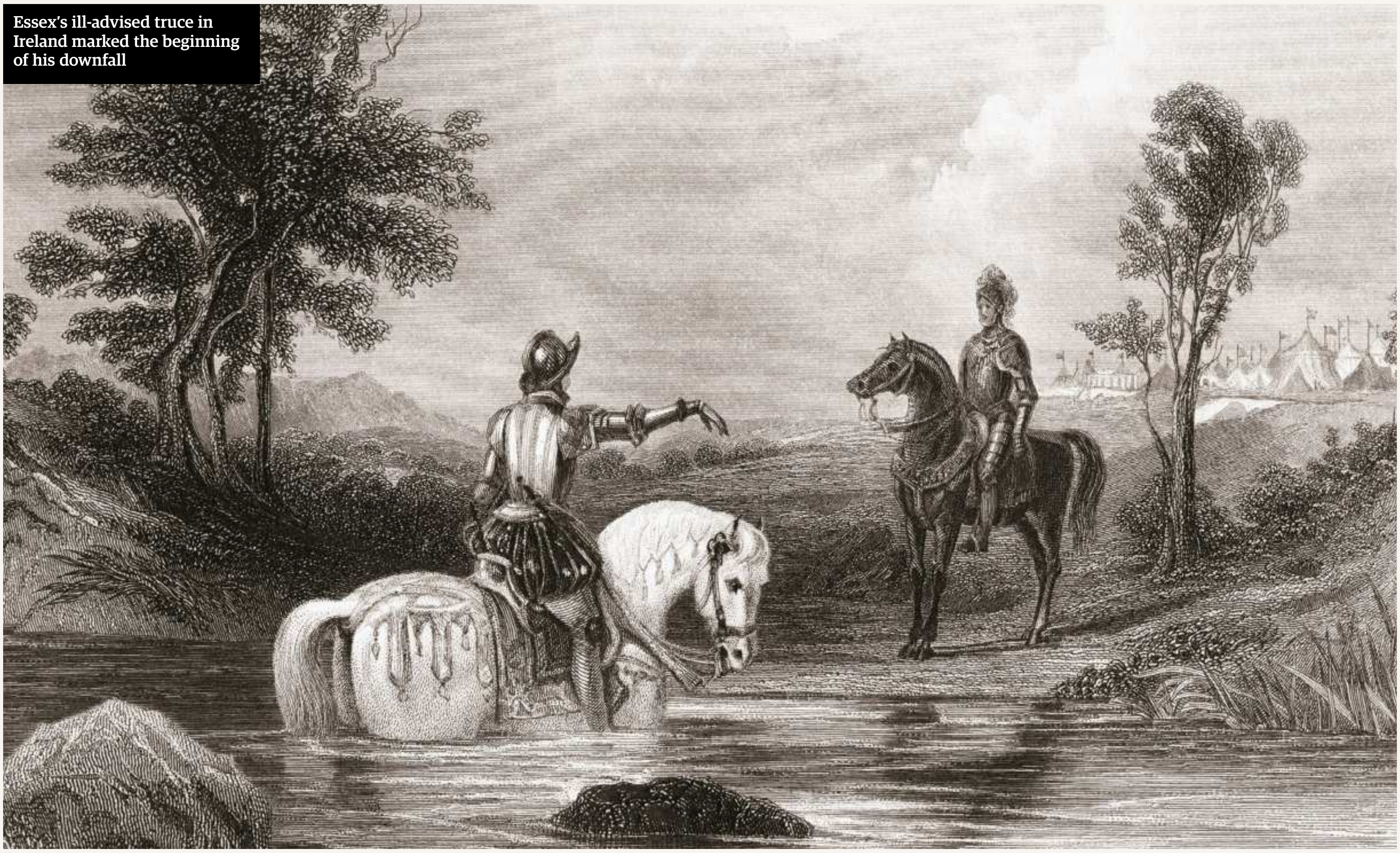
On the 6th, some of Essex's other followers made their way to the Globe Theatre with a special request for the Lord Chamberlain's Men, the company of actors that Shakespeare wrote for. They wanted the Men to perform Shakespeare's *Richard II*, including the scene where the king is deposed. It was controversial, and the Men hesitated until they had been bribed with enough money to change their mind.



Elizabeth enjoyed Essex's youthful company, despite his impulsive behaviour



Essex once dared to half-draw his sword after the queen struck him



Essex's ill-advised truce in Ireland marked the beginning of his downfall

It was a stupid and rash move that screamed out that a rebellion was in the works. Both Elizabeth and Cecil, aware of how arrogant Essex could be, knew that he would not take his removal from power lightly, and now he had played his hand. The queen's guard was doubled, and on the 7th, Essex was ordered to appear in front of the Council to face questioning. Realising that his treacherous plot had been ruined, Essex decided the only way he could succeed was if he could get the people of London to rally behind him.

The next morning, the Lord Keeper Thomas Everton arrived at Essex house with three other men in the name of the queen. It was their duty to take Essex into custody, but he refused to back down. Seizing the moment, he took the men hostage and left them at the house, before gathering his supporters and making his way down to London. It was now or never.

Essex hoped that by turning up with his supporters, he would be able to force an audience with the queen. But Essex had overestimated the amount of support he would receive. At most, he had mustered up around 300 followers, many of who didn't actually realise that they had joined a rebellion. Clearly, Essex's uprising was poorly planned and, consequently, poorly executed.

As Essex made his way through the city, Cecil took action. Denouncing Essex as a traitor, he promised that anyone who abandoned the rebellion would be safe from punishment. Immediately, Essex's support dissipated and his plan fell into disarray. Understanding that his cause was lost, Essex fled back home, only to discover that his hostages had disappeared.

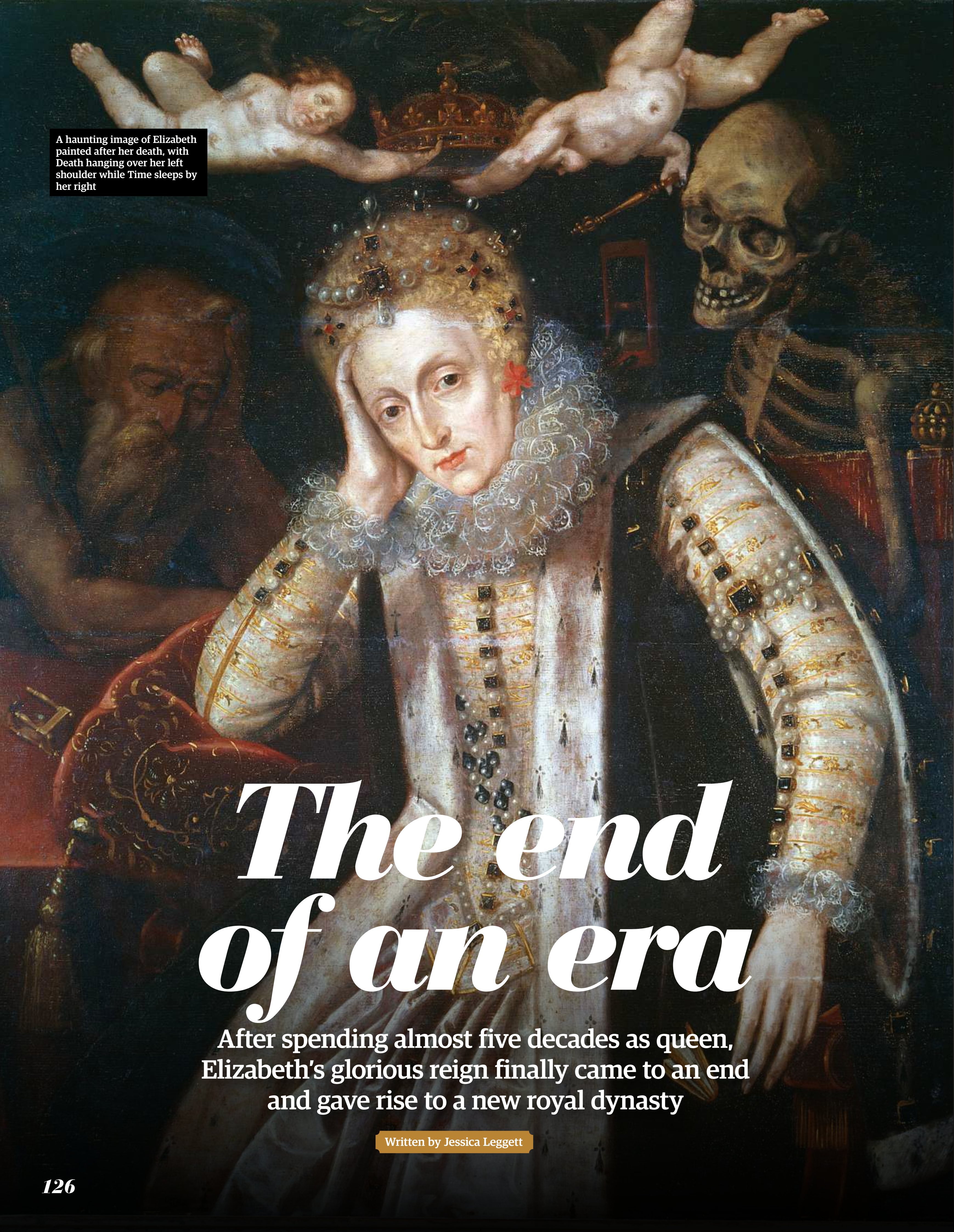
In the meantime, the Lord High Admiral, the Earl of Nottingham, had surrounded Essex House. Essex faced a standoff with the queen's men as Nottingham demanded that he surrender himself. Trying to cover his treasonous tracks, Essex burnt any evidence that could incriminate him and his fellow conspirators. It was only after he had destroyed all of it that he finally surrendered.

Essex and the other ringleaders, including Southampton, Danvers and Blount, were all arrested and tried for treason less than two weeks later. Although there was a trial and Essex attempted to defend himself, it was obvious that a guilty verdict was guaranteed. He was eventually convinced to confess to the plot and he named the other conspirators, including his own sister, Penelope.

Despite this, Cecil had convinced the queen to show clemency following the rebellion, and Penelope survived her brother's attempts to denounce her, while other supporters were fined. Southampton pulled through as well, although he remained imprisoned, but the others were not so fortunate. Both Danvers and Blount were executed, along with two of the other plotters, Sir Gelli Meyrick and Sir Henry Cuffe.

Meanwhile, Essex was privately executed at the Tower of London on 25 February, around two and a half weeks after his ill-fated rebellion. His beheading was not smooth sailing, as it took three blows for the head to sever completely. It was said that his rival, Raleigh, had watched the execution – ironically, he would lose his own head to the executioner's axe in 1618.

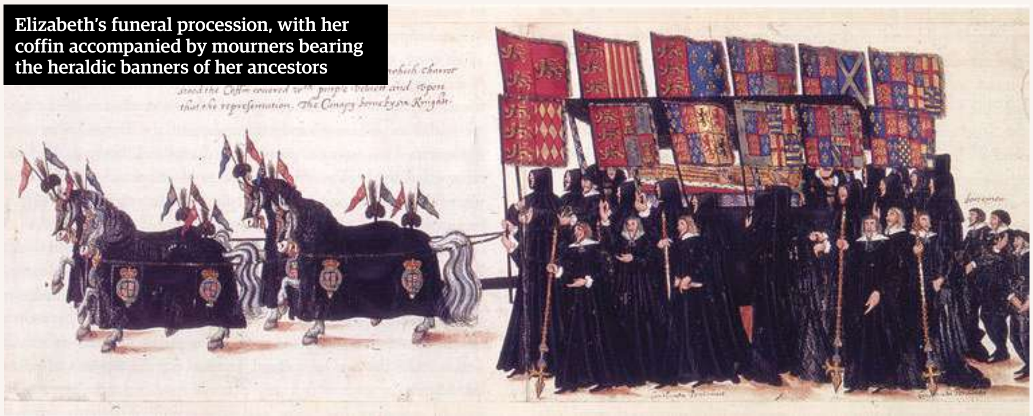
As for Elizabeth, Essex never got to see his queen again after that doomed encounter in her bedchamber. Though his rebellion was never a serious threat to Elizabeth, Essex's behaviour had warranted the death sentence. Nevertheless, this did not prevent the queen from quietly mourning him. With Essex, she had relived the youth that she desperately tried to cling to throughout her last years. But by indulging his impulsive whims, Elizabeth had created a man who was blinded by ambition and power, and he paid the ultimate price for it.


A haunting image of Elizabeth painted after her death, with Death hanging over her left shoulder while Time sleeps by her right

The end of an era

After spending almost five decades as queen, Elizabeth's glorious reign finally came to an end and gave rise to a new royal dynasty

Written by Jessica Leggett



Elizabeth's funeral procession, with her coffin accompanied by mourners bearing the heraldic banners of her ancestors

Robert Cecil, Queen Elizabeth's Secretary of State, sighed with exasperation. He watched as she stood in the middle of the floor, completely motionless. The queen, wallowing in melancholy, had been in the same position for days with no desire to move. Cecil knew that the queen was ill, and that she desperately needed some rest. Plucking up the courage, he walked over to Elizabeth and bravely told her that she must go to bed. The queen looked at him with shock and furiously responded, "The word must is not to be used to princes!" Even on her deathbed, Elizabeth was not to be ordered about.

Queen Elizabeth was one of the most formidable and successful rulers to have ever graced the English throne. Her reign of almost 45 years was a golden age of exploration, trade and culture. She had united England under one church, a contentious issue ever since the reign of her father, King Henry VIII, and turned her country into a global power to be reckoned with.

But Elizabeth's success had come at a price. As a young girl, she had witnessed her father's numerous marriages and obsessive quest for a male heir, which triggered the tragic downfall of her mother. As a young woman, she had watched her half-sister, Queen Mary, fight against the opposition she had faced because of her choice of groom - while Elizabeth herself was caught up in scandalous rumours of an affair with Sir Thomas Seymour, the fourth husband of her stepmother and guardian, Catherine Parr.

Elizabeth had learnt early on just how dangerous personal and indeed sexual relationships could be in a court dominated by intrigue and conspiracy. As well as this, her experiences had taught her that her power as a female ruler would always be questioned if she had a husband. Unsurprisingly, the queen reacted by dragging her heels when it came to the subject of marriage. For years, her advisers had tried in vain to encourage their queen to get married and provide the heir to the English throne.

There were fleeting moments when it appeared that Elizabeth was going to get engaged. The closest she got was to Francis, Duke of Anjou, who was over two decades her junior and someone she cared deeply for. But opposition from the public and her Privy Council, largely because the Duke was both French and a Catholic, forced her to forget about the match. Ultimately, Elizabeth was destined to remain as the Virgin Queen.

With no direct heir to succeed her, the Tudor dynasty was destined to come to an end with Elizabeth. As she grew older and passed the age where she could bear children, it became clear to those closest to the queen that other arrangements would have to be made to secure the English succession.

For the first three decades of Elizabeth's reign her cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots, was her nearest legitimate heir. But after much back and forth, Mary was eventually beheaded in 1587, after she was implicated in a plot against Elizabeth. At the time of her death, Mary had been kept under house arrest for almost 20 years.

Following Mary's execution her son, James, inherited the Scottish throne as King James VI. In the same instance, he also inherited her legal right to the English throne. For many in England, James was a far more agreeable option to succeed Elizabeth since, unlike his mother, he had been raised as a Protestant.

James was the logical choice to succeed Elizabeth, but she stubbornly refused to name an heir, despite petitions from parliament. The queen knew that the second she officially named a successor, factions would start to form as courtiers would flock to their side, lining up to endear themselves to the next king of England. This would lead to conflict and so the queen's hesitation was understandable - but it also plunged the country into a succession crisis.

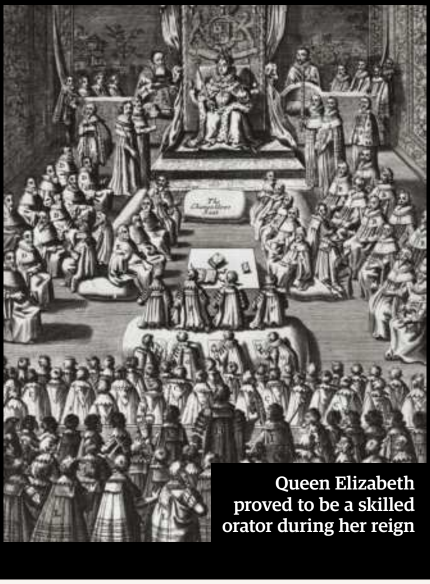
The 'Golden Speech'

Elizabeth's emotional last stand for her country

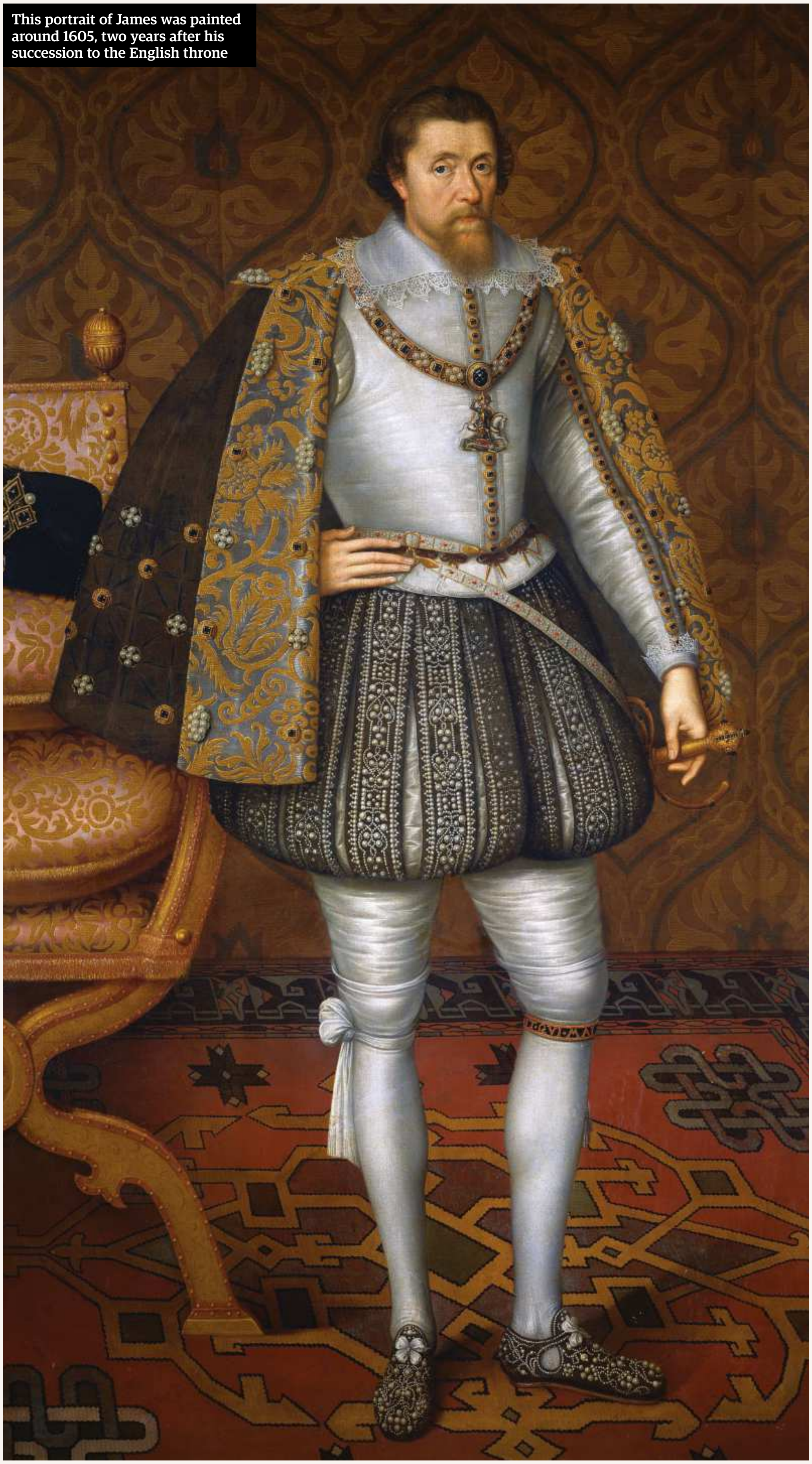
Elizabeth's 'Golden Speech' has gone down in history as one of the most famous she ever delivered, along with her iconic speech to the troops at Tilbury. With the monopoly crisis growing and the members of parliament angrily demanding reform, the queen decided it was time to face them in person - for what she knew would be the last time.

On 30 November 1601, Elizabeth entered Whitehall and addressed all 141 members of parliament. Along with her promise to end the practice of monopolies, the queen also spoke of her devotion to England: "And though you have had, and may have, many mightier and wiser princes sitting in this seat, yet you never had, nor shall have, any that will love you better."

Her moving speech did turn out to be Elizabeth's last to parliament, and it surprised many of the members who did not anticipate such a touching moment from their queen. Her love and respect for them, detailed in her speech, helped to dissolve tension surrounding the monopoly issue and wider economic concerns. For many, the 'Golden Speech' is seen as a symbolic end to her reign, with the queen passing away less than two years later.



Queen Elizabeth proved to be a skilled orator during her reign



This portrait of James was painted around 1605, two years after his succession to the English throne

> "The death of Essex broke the queen's heart"

In the face of the queen's resistance, Cecil knew that the question of the English succession needed to be answered. After all, the peace and stability that Elizabeth had fostered for her country during her long reign depended on it. Taking the matter into his own hands, Cecil decided that the best way forward was to begin secret negotiations with the Scottish king. He hoped that by contacting James, he was ensuring a peaceful transition of power in the event of Elizabeth's death.

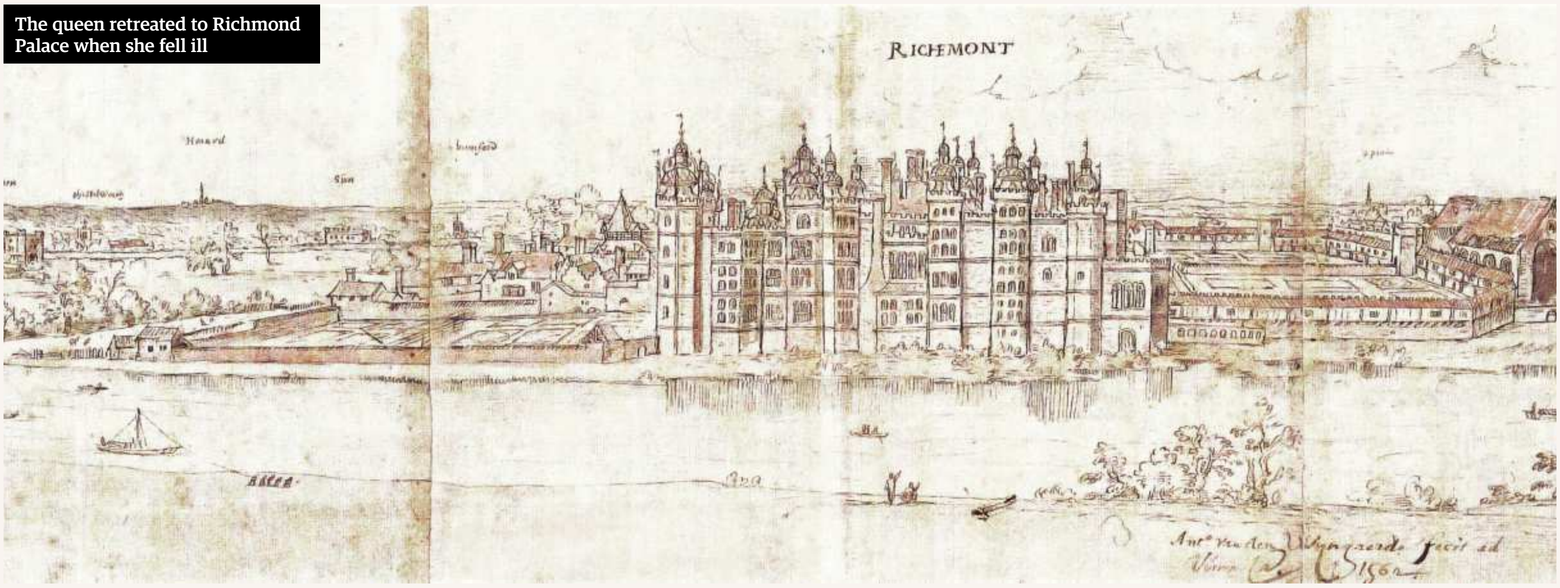
But Cecil's desire to initiate contact with James was hindered thanks to his rival at court and Elizabeth's young favourite, Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex. They had battled each other for the queen's favour, and Essex's charming and flirtatious nature had won her over - with Essex secretly in communication with James himself. Nonetheless, Essex's unruly behaviour and disastrous rebellion eventually led to his downfall and execution in February 1601.

The death of Essex broke the queen's heart, even though his actions had forced the consequences. However, with Essex gone, he had finally been removed as an obstacle to Cecil's ambitions. He was soon able to start his own secret correspondence with King James, with their letters written in code - as Cecil's actions could cost him not only his career, but his life.

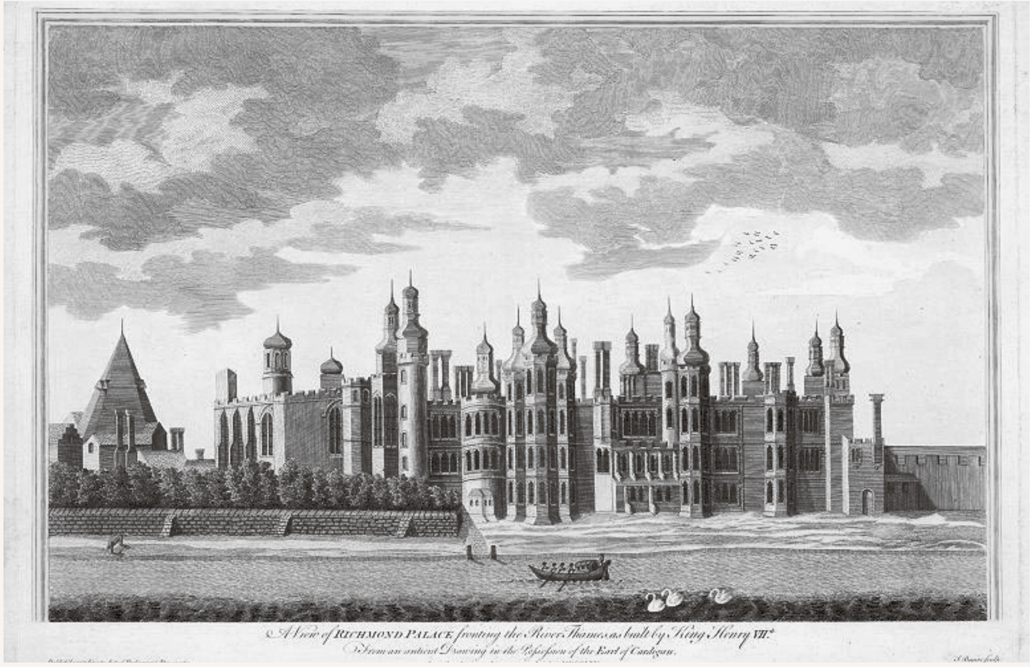
Cecil sent James advice on the best ways to flatter the queen and earn her favour, in the hope that she would relent and name him as her heir. James himself had spent years trying to get Elizabeth to accept him to no avail. One famous example of this is when the queen was facing down the incoming Spanish Armada, and James promised his support to her in a letter in which he referred to himself as her "natural son."

Cecil's clandestine efforts were for the greater good of the kingdom, and they appeared to be working, as James agreed to seek Elizabeth's approval by building a harmonious relationship. The queen responded well and even granted James an extra £2,000 a year for his English pension, but she still did not commit to naming him as her heir.

Even though Cecil worked tirelessly to secure a peaceful succession, he never actually wanted to lose Elizabeth. As her predecessors had shown, a new monarchy always brought with it new upheaval. However, this sentiment was not shared by everyone at the English court, who looked forward to a fresh start for both the monarchy and the country.


RICHMONT
Ant. van den Wyngaerde fecit ad vivum 1562

The queen retreated to Richmond Palace when she fell ill


A View of RICHMOND PALACE fronting the River Thames as built by King Henry VIIth
From an antient Drawing in the Possession of the Earl of Cardigan.

Throughout her reign, the queen had cultivated an image for herself as an eternally youthful, beautiful and powerful woman. Even as she aged, Elizabeth was determined to maintain this façade and keep to the traditional status quo of her court. But there was a new generation of courtiers and members of the public who saw her as a traditionalist, standing in the way of change.

As glorious as Elizabeth's reign had been, now there were many who were becoming disillusioned with her. In her later years the economy suffered as a result of poor harvests and the unsuccessful war against Ireland, which had wasted a lot of money. To top it all off, growing unrest in regard to monopolies had reached boiling point.

The queen had abused the monopoly system for a long time, granting them to her favourite courtiers which caused prices to rise, while she also made financial gains from them. It led to one of the biggest crises to hit during the last few years of her reign, but luckily for the queen, she won parliament over with an impassioned speech about her love for her country.

The situation in England rallied once again as the harvests improved and a truce was reached with Ireland. Elizabeth herself seemed to gain a new lease of life, experiencing good health for the first time in years. Although England was not at the height of its glory, it was at least heading in a positive direction. Then, all of a sudden, the queen's health began to quickly deteriorate.

On top of her ill health, Elizabeth had also fallen into a deep bout of depression. It had slowly set in over the years, as the queen had witnessed the deaths of many of her long-standing supporters and friends, such as Robert Dudley, Sir Francis Walsingham and Sir William Cecil, Robert Cecil's father. William's death particularly affected the queen, so much so that she even fed him herself in the fruitless hope that he would get better.

Elizabeth's vibrant and charismatic personality, which had charmed all of those around her, dissipated completely. By 1603, she was suffering with a fever and throat ulcers, which made it increasingly painful for her to eat properly. Her sudden illness came as a shock to many because it had arrived so quickly – but Elizabeth knew that death awaited her.

The queen moved to Richmond Palace to cope with her illness. Perhaps hoping to avoid the inevitable, she stood for hours on end and refused to go to bed, ignoring Cecil's protestations. She eventually chose to lie on some cushions on the floor but remained adamant that she would not go to bed – and that she would not write a will nor name an heir.

An exasperated Cecil once again decided to take matters into his own hands. Realising that Elizabeth's days were dangerously numbered, he chose to send James a draft proclamation for his accession to the throne. At the same time, the

> "Hoping to avoid the inevitable, she stood for hours on end and refused to go to bed, ignoring Cecil's protestations"

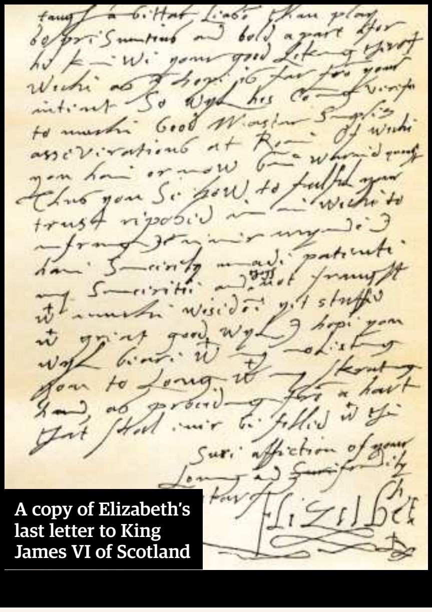
Elizabeth's last letter

Elizabeth remained stubborn even in her final correspondence

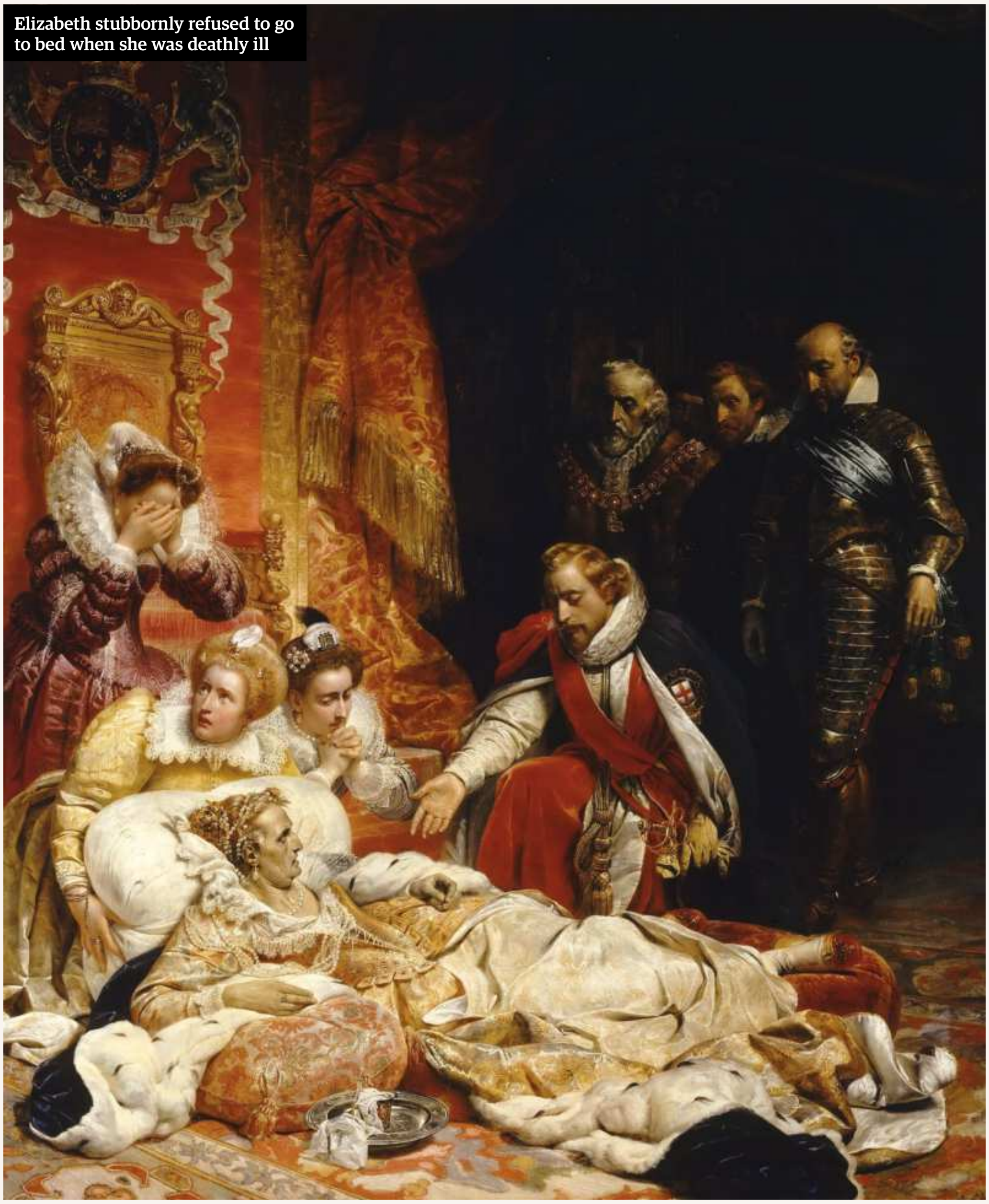
It was around 1585 when Elizabeth started to communicate with James directly, instead of using their ambassadors. Although this correspondence remained irregular, it did continue for the rest of the queen's life, with James hoping to secure confirmation from her that he was going to be named her heir.

Their letters were rather affectionate, with Elizabeth often addressing James as "my good brother." Her very last letter to James is dated 5 January 1603, just two months before her death. In it, she justifies her actions against Spain, perhaps hoping that James will understand her reasons and continue her foreign policy after her death.

However, the most interesting aspect of the letter is not what it contains, but what it is missing. By this point, Elizabeth's health is clearly declining, and it is obvious that she is nearing death's door. Despite this, she still does not acknowledge James as her heir, even though they both know that he will be the one to succeed her on the throne after she passes away. The letter itself is carefully balanced in this respect, as the queen appears fond of James while still denying him the official role as her heir.



A copy of Elizabeth's last letter to King James VI of Scotland



Elizabeth stubbornly refused to go to bed when she was deathly ill

queen's cousin, Robert Carey, Earl of Monmouth lurked outside the palace, waiting for news of her death. His plan was to rush to Edinburgh as soon as she had passed away to tell James, hoping that he would gain favour with the new king as a result.

On 23 March, Elizabeth was at death's door and her councillors were forced to pluck up the courage and ask her whether she wished James to succeed her. Unable to speak, the queen lifted her hand and drew a circle around her head, to represent a crown, thereby finally confirming that James was her heir to the throne.

Soon afterwards, Queen Elizabeth fell into a coma. She never woke up, finally succumbing to her illness in the early hours of 24 March 1603, aged 69 years old. In the dead of night, Elizabeth's body was transported via the Thames from Richmond Palace to Whitehall, where she lay in state until her funeral. Meanwhile, Monmouth raced north to Edinburgh to inform James that he was now the king of England.

Just over a month after her death, the queen's funeral was held at Westminster Abbey on 28 April. Her coffin was draped in purple cloth and was carried by a hearse through the streets, driven by horses covered with black velvet. It was said that the painted wooden effigy on her coffin was so lifelike that when her body passed her weeping subjects, they gasped in shock.

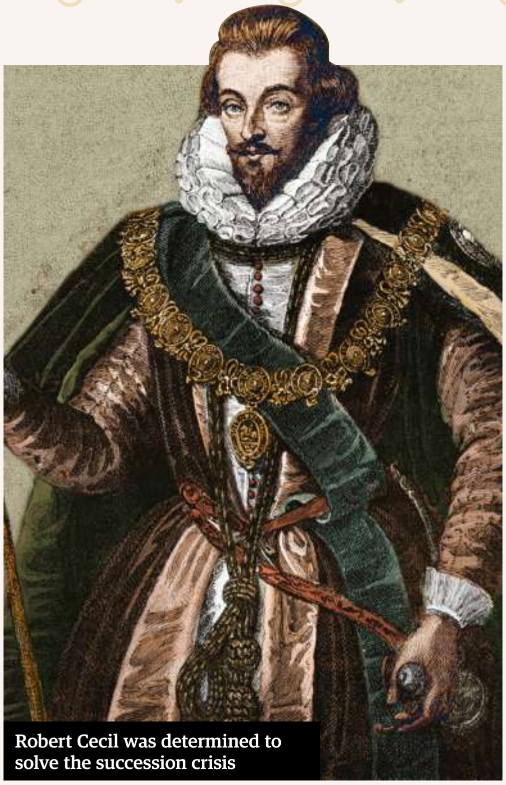
James had left Edinburgh just under two weeks after Elizabeth's death, and he did not reach London until 7 May. He was welcomed by his new subjects, most of whom were relieved that the succession was peaceful and smooth. Courtiers immediately converged on their new king, hoping to secure his favour.

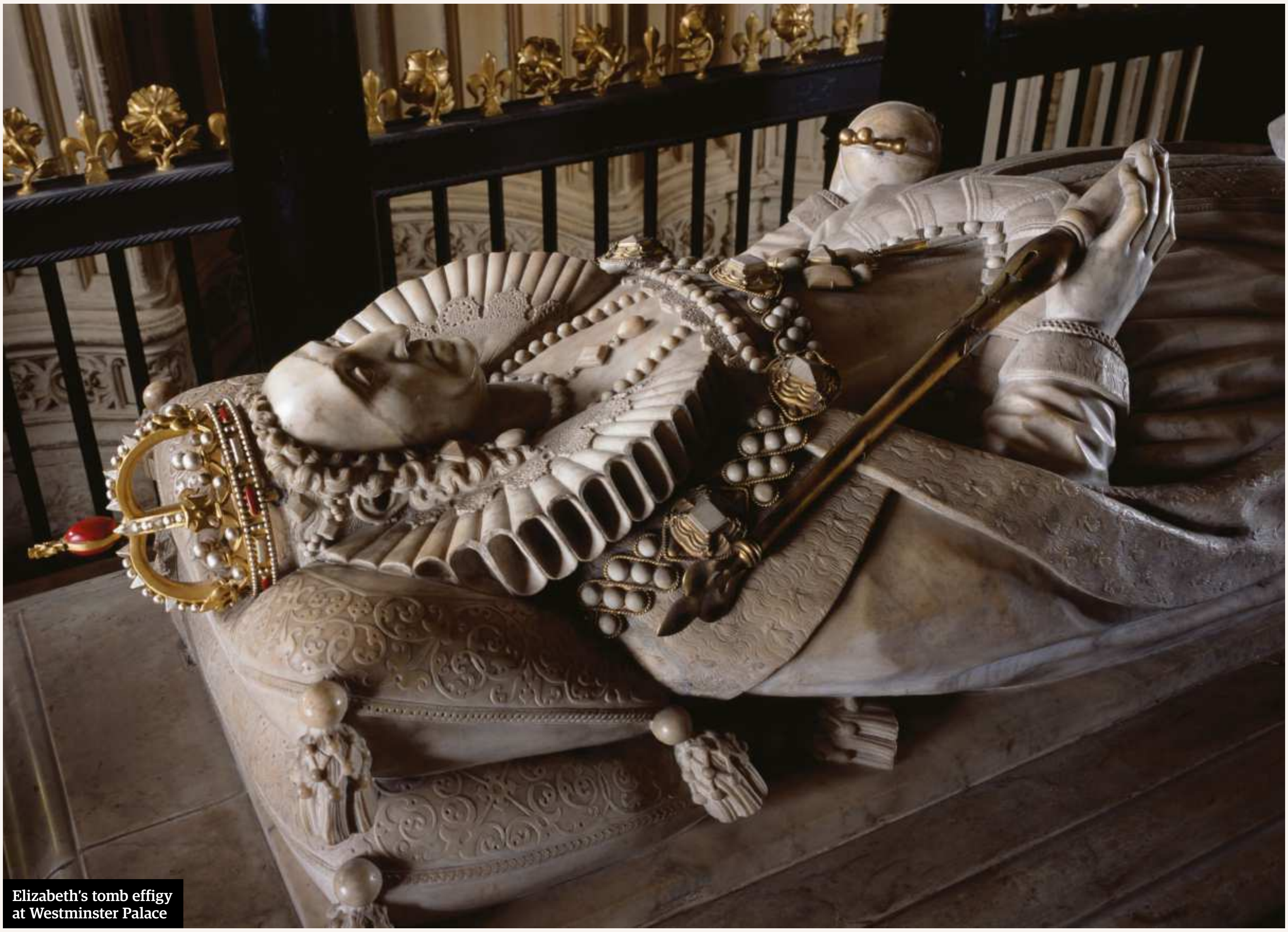
“Although her popularity had waned in her final years, the queen remained devoted to her country”

Robert Cecil’s clandestine letters to James and his efforts to sort out the succession had paid off, as he remained as the king’s right-hand man for the first nine years of his reign, until Cecil’s death in 1612. As for Monmouth, James had initially made him a gentleman of the bedchamber for informing him of the queen’s death. However, he faced significant backlash at court for rushing off so quickly, as many felt his actions lacked the respect and decency owed to Elizabeth. The situation led to James dropping Monmouth from his new post.

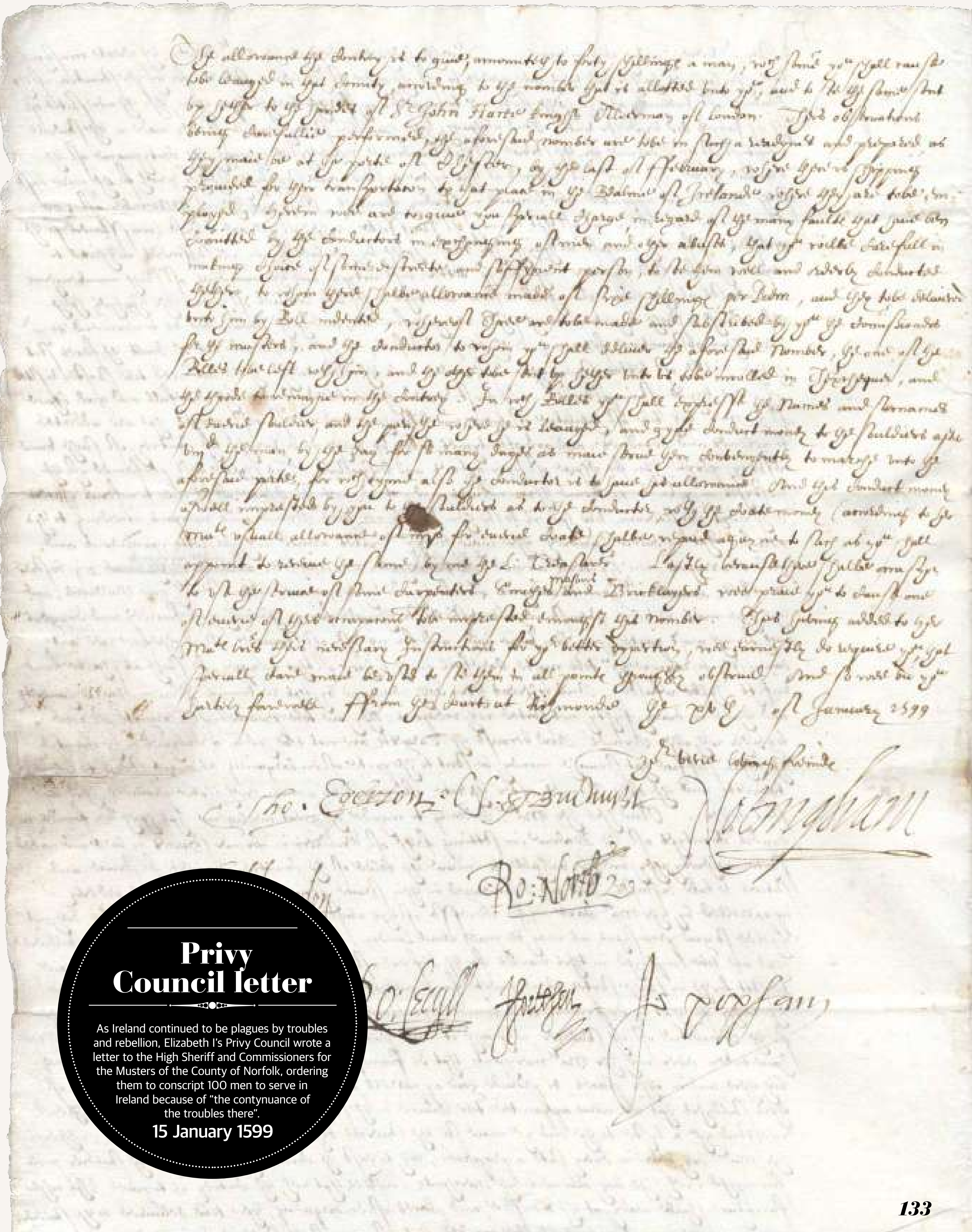
The accession of King James ushered in a new royal dynasty for the English monarchy, the Stuarts. The Stuarts had ruled Scotland since 1371, over a century before the Tudor dynasty was founded in England by King Henry VII in 1485. The crowns of Scotland and England became personally unified under James, which eventually paved the way for the Acts of Union in 1707 and the creation of Great Britain. The Stuarts would rule over England for over a century, until the death of a childless Queen Anne in 1714.

Originally buried in the vault of her grandfather at Westminster Abbey, in 1606 Elizabeth’s body was moved and she now lies on top of her half-sister, Queen Mary I. The death of Elizabeth closed a glorious, if at times turbulent, chapter in England’s history. Although her popularity had waned in her final years, the queen remained devoted to her country – and remains today as one of Britain’s best-loved monarchs.


Robert Cecil was determined to solve the succession crisis


Elizabeth’s tomb effigy at Westminster Palace

After o^r^ verie hartie commendacions. Though it hath ben alwayes his Ma^ts^ care in the private [illegible]
[illegible] that [illegible] of the labouring subiects for the preservacion of the
Realme of Ireland as he hath forborne to impose any charge [illegible] upon them, yet the necessitie of
the affayres doth urge him unto. And although that there have ben sundrie levies of men made in the severall
Counties of the Realme for the service of that Kingdome within theis late yeares, the continuance of the
troubles there his Ma^tie^ is inforced at this tyme to send newe supplyes thither; which for the more ease
of the Realme are appointed to be levied in sundry Counties, Amongst which the number of 100
are appointed to be taken out of that Countie of Norffolke, whereof you are [illegible] commanded for the
musters [illegible] at this tyme his Ma^ties^ pleasure is by theis our letters [illegible] to
levie the aforesaid number [illegible] instruccions and [illegible] of [illegible]
[illegible] in some Counties [illegible] to be levied of [illegible]
[illegible] to [illegible] that you shall [illegible], and [illegible] commanded us to recommend it unto
you [illegible] carefully by yo^r^ [illegible] out of [illegible] the [illegible]
[illegible] of [illegible] and the Counties shall [illegible]
[illegible] of [illegible] yet we [illegible] in the [illegible] carefull and good choise
[illegible] of [illegible] and [illegible] people that are addicted
to [illegible] and [illegible], and are oftentymes taken by [illegible] to discharge the Countrey of such unne-
cessary people [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] the
[illegible] in order to [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] to [illegible]
[illegible] to [illegible] with good Armes and weapons, according to this
[illegible] that in [illegible] there may [illegible] with [illegible], powder and
good Matches, [illegible] armed ~~[illegible]~~, [illegible] Musketts ~~[illegible]~~ [illegible]
Musketts ~~[illegible]~~ with good Matches and [illegible], ~~[illegible]~~ [illegible] with good [illegible], and
that there may [illegible] with good swordes and daggers
with [illegible] and for no [illegible] of service. And [illegible]
earnestly to [illegible] most carefull in the choise of [illegible], for [illegible] as shall be found
[illegible] shall [illegible]. And whereas [illegible] by that [illegible] in [illegible]
[illegible] in [illegible] with weapons, they are to be provided of [illegible]
[illegible] with other Armes. And because the [illegible] are not [illegible] in the Countrey
[illegible] that [illegible] money [illegible] to the port of imbarqueing, as maie serve to buy the
[illegible] and the other Armes, after the rate of [illegible] a man, w^ch^ shalbe provided there and
sent [illegible]. And [illegible] his Ma^tie^ [illegible] to mynde the great negligence that hath ben founde in
[illegible] Counties of the Realme in setting forth of souldiers in former [illegible] in bare and naked
sorte, whereby they are [illegible] the [illegible] of the Countrey, unmeete for service, and
[illegible] to take [illegible], and are discouraged in their service, [illegible] other souldiers [illegible]
apparrelled by his Ma^ts^ care [illegible] of that abuse, and knowing that [illegible] doth not
[illegible] as may be made about London, It hath ben considered [illegible] souldiers
that are to be imployed in this warre for the defence of the Realme and honor of his Ma^tie^, maie
[illegible] souldiers and [illegible] that [illegible]
[illegible] it is founde that [illegible] of the apparrell would be [illegible]
for the [illegible] of the souldiers, although it will [illegible] to his Ma^ts^ [illegible]. And [illegible]
[illegible] with his Ma^ts^ merchante that do furnishe the apparrell for the souldiers [illegible]
[illegible] and in other places, to provide good apparrell at reasonable rates, for the apparrelling of
theis souldiers that are nowe appointed to be levied in the severall Counties of the Realme, [illegible]
[illegible] to the [illegible] may [illegible] the severall [illegible] and [illegible] of apparrell, [illegible]
his Ma^tie^ [illegible] a proporcion, [illegible] to [illegible] the Countrey, and [illegible] the souldiers well
furnished [illegible] allowed to the merchante, [illegible] the Countrey is to paie. That [illegible]
furniture shalbe readie at the [illegible], and places of imbarqueing, there to be delivered to the souldiers
[illegible] shall [illegible], that if any of the souldiers [illegible]
[illegible], they shall not take the apparrell w^th^ them [illegible] delivered upon [illegible]



Privy Council letter

As Ireland continued to be plagues by troubles and rebellion, Elizabeth I's Privy Council wrote a letter to the High Sheriff and Commissioners for the Musters of the County of Norfolk, ordering them to conscript 100 men to serve in Ireland because of "the contynuance of the troubles there".

15 January 1599

Legacy

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The Virgin Queen is famous for having never married or producing an heir, but what would have happened to the Tudor dynasty if she had?

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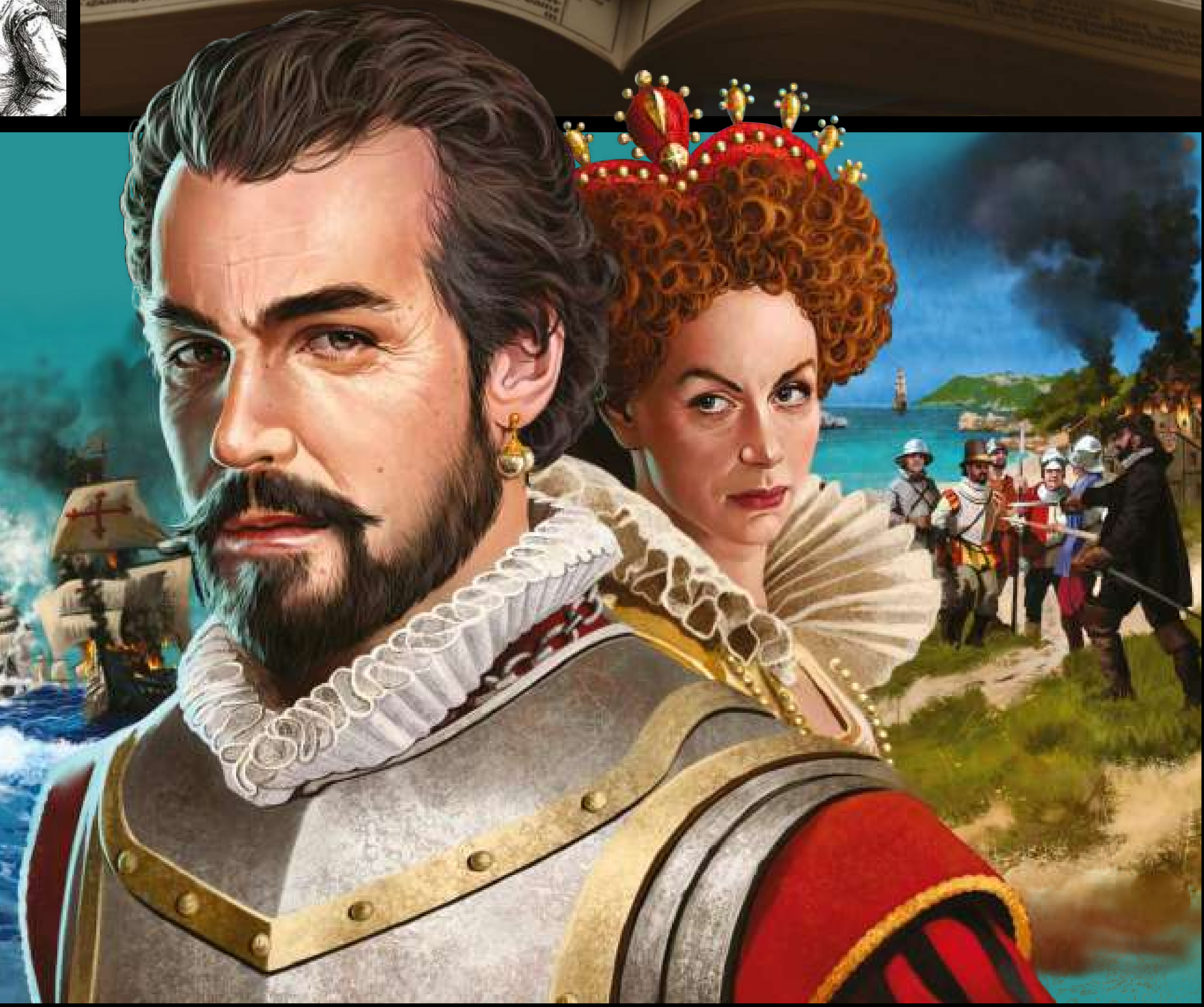
THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE Apostle to the Romanes.
CHAP. I.



What if...

Queen Elizabeth I had married?

The Virgin Queen is famous for having never married or producing an heir, but what would have happened to the Tudor dynasty if she had?

Elizabeth's sister and previous Tudor monarch, Mary, had been married to King Philip II of Spain until her death in 1558. There was a possibility that Elizabeth would marry her half-sister's widower, but neither were particularly interested in the match and Philip would have only proposed for the good of Catholicism. Elizabeth also realised Philip had been an unpopular Spanish king with the people of England during his marriage to Mary. Another candidate for the queen's hand was Eric of Sweden, but her advisers believed there would be few benefits from an alliance with the House of Vasa. Elizabeth also insisted on never marrying someone she hadn't seen before, so Archdukes Charles and Ferdinand of Austria were out of the frame, as was John Frederick, Duke of Saxony. None of them would risk the public ridicule of journeying to England to face being rejected. As for potential English suitors, Sir William of Pickering and the Earl of Arundel were never considered seriously, while Robert Dudley, who was thought to be Elizabeth's true love, was out of contention due to the rumours that he had murdered his wife. Therefore, the best choice of husband for Elizabeth I would have been Francis, Duke of Alençon. An alliance with France would have supported the English cause against the Spanish, and Alençon had met with Elizabeth on two prior occasions, even sending his servant Jean de Simier to woo the queen on his behalf in January 1579.

With the union of Elizabeth and Alençon, the English and French dynasties join as one. The marriage shocks Spain, which delays its attacks on England, and no Armada is ever raised. Alençon postpones campaigns in the Netherlands for the occasion and the French influence on England increases. This isn't welcomed by everyone, and the country begins to tear itself apart socially. The tension simmers for decades, but Elizabeth gives birth to a son, Henry. Being older than her husband, she dies, leaving Alençon to rule France and their son to rule England as king. This is not a popular move with vast swathes of the population, as Protestantism is now well established and the idea of a Catholic French king is met with much disdain. Uprisings begin all over the nation and a civil war eventually breaks out in England between Catholic and Protestant factions. James VI and the Scots join with the Protestant cause while Ireland benefits from a lack of Tudor campaigns in the Emerald Isle. The bloody war means the Stuart dynasty never claims the English crown as the Catholic forces, bolstered by the French, eventually come out on top. There's no union of the crowns, but the opportunity for Scottish armies to move south once again is possible, and they seek to install James's son Charles as a puppet king. The conquest of the New World is now a joint Anglo-French venture as the two powers focus their efforts on nullifying the growing Spanish Empire.

Expert: Elizabeth Norton

Elizabeth Norton is a historian specialising in the queens of England and the Tudor period. Her most recent book is *The Temptation Of Elizabeth Tudor*, which looks at the relationship between Thomas Seymour and the future Elizabeth I. She has a forthcoming book on The Lives Of Tudor Women, which will be published by Head of Zeus, and has also written biographies of four of Henry VIII's wives. Elizabeth is also regularly featured on television and radio.

How would it be different?

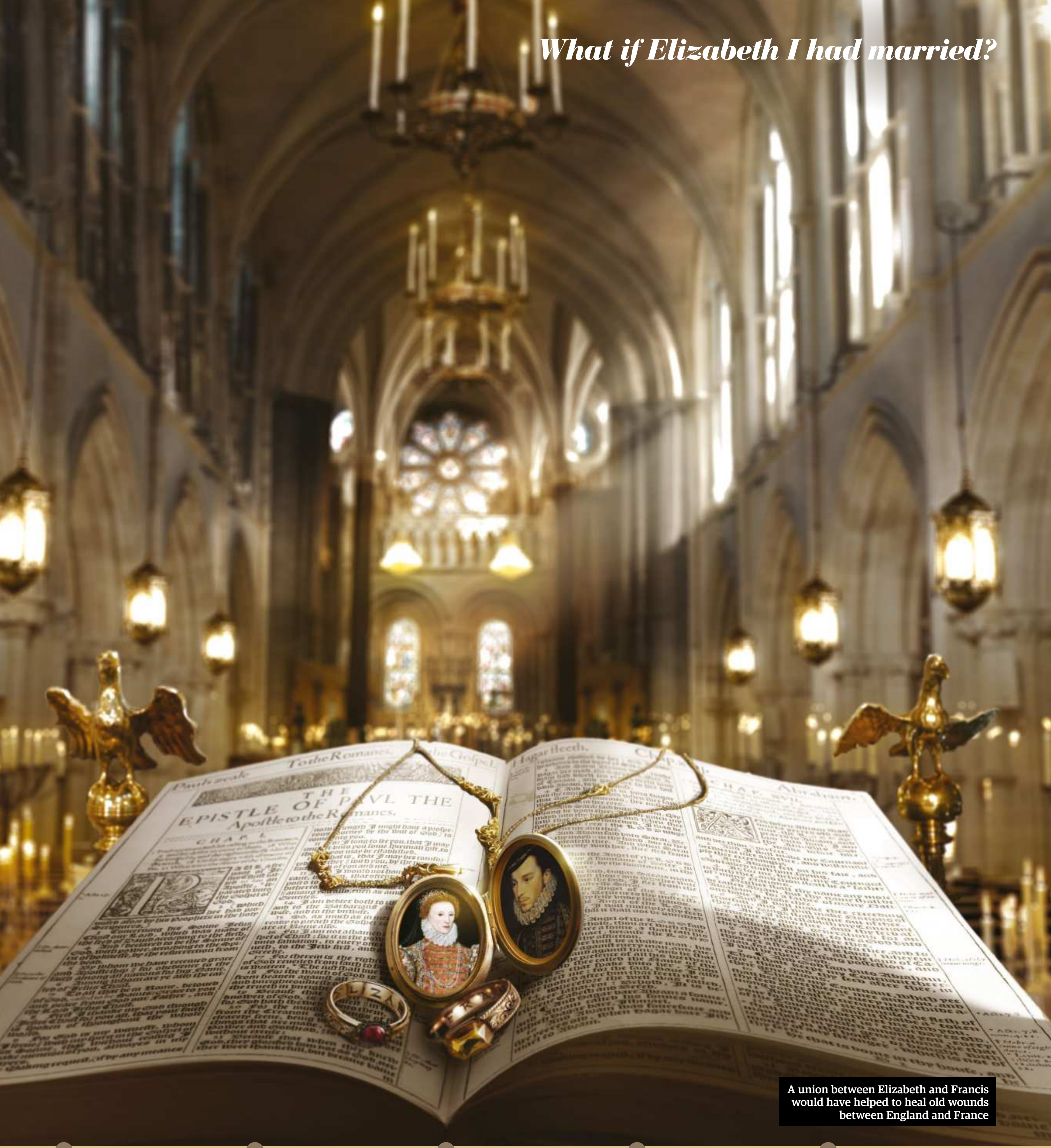
Move to marriage
Francis, duke of Alençon, decides the time is right to ask for Elizabeth's hand for a second time and sends a trusty servant over on his behalf.
1578

Royal wedding
A grand wedding is held. The duke postpones his campaigns to the Netherlands, and with a new Anglo-French alliance, there is no war with Spain and no armada. **1581**

Royal baby
Fast-forward a few years and Elizabeth gives birth to a son. The child's dual nationality brings England and France closer together in an alliance.
1582

An uncertain royal future
Alençon succeeds to the French throne. Elizabeth divides her time between France and England and the population becomes uneasy over who will be her heir. **1589**

Death of Elizabeth
The last Tudor queen's death triggers a changing of the guard. Francis stays on the French throne and installs his young son as the regent of England, surrounded by advisers. **1603**



A union between Elizabeth and Francis would have helped to heal old wounds between England and France

Path to war
The English public don't take kindly to a French king and there is unrest. A religiously motivated civil war breaks out in the country.
1615

Bloodshed in the capital
The Catholics have support from France while the Protestants are boosted by Scottish aid. The bloody war centres on London with fierce fighting outside Westminster Abbey. **1616**

Catholics win the civil war
The superior Anglo-French army manage to hold on to power after a costly conflict. England is rebuilt after civil war but dissent is still felt in some quarters.
1622

England's new international standing
A Catholic England experiences much improved relations with both France and Italy, and the alliance makes Spain its number one rival. **1623**

A future of friendship
The Anglo-French monarchy endures for generations with successful expeditions to the New World. There is no union of the crowns and relations with Spain remain frosty. **1624**

The Tudor empire

In the age of exploration, the fate of nations and the fortunes of men were created, sunk and stolen on the open seas

Written by Frances White

In the years before Elizabeth ascended the throne, England was plagued by internal conflicts. Her father Henry VIII's split from the church had caused England to fall out of favour with Rome, and then the early death of his heir Edward VI prompted a succession crisis. The country had switched from Protestant to Catholic with the rise of Mary I, and those who dared to challenge her were burned in the streets without mercy. While other countries were prospering, England was struggling to maintain order within its own borders. What the country needed was a stable, temperate ruler, one whose reign would allow the nation to flourish; that is what it found in Elizabeth.

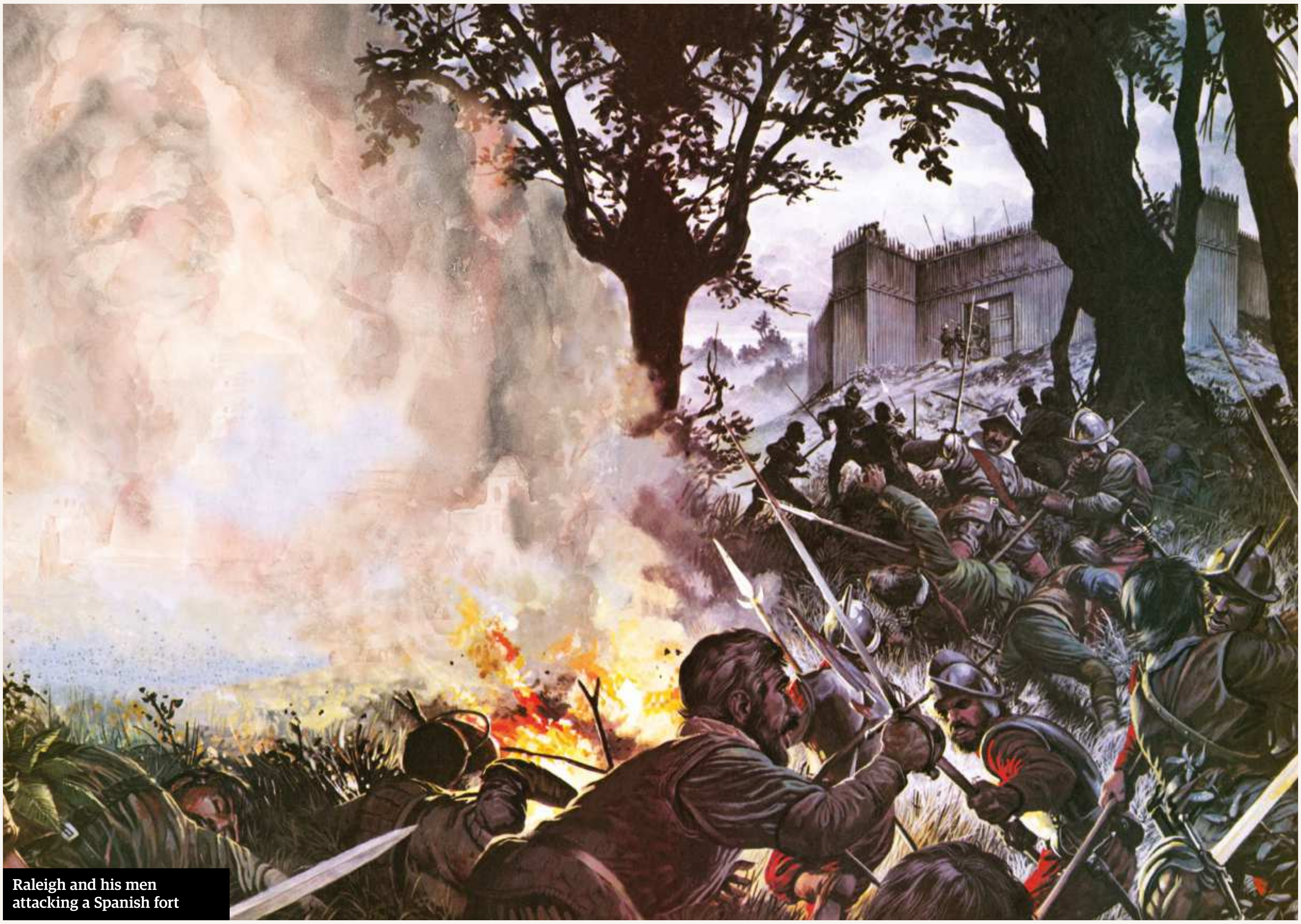
A Protestant, but without the extreme beliefs of her father, Elizabeth was tolerant, moderate and wise enough to listen to her counsellors. Finally, with the country somewhat stable, its population was able to look outwards. They discovered that the world had very much moved on without them. Spanish, Italian and Portuguese explorers ruled the waves. Using their sophisticated navigation tools, they had set up powerful and profitable trading roots, and if it didn't act soon, England would find itself isolated and vulnerable.

Armed with new navigation tools, English sailors were finally bold enough to sail beyond the sight of land and into the open seas. The spirit of exploration gripped the nation, which was eager to best the competition, spread Christianity and, most importantly, claim riches. Figures such as Walter Raleigh and Francis Drake, a virtual unknown, became household names after completing valiant voyages for the English crown. As riches began to pour in, more and more ambitious seamen took to the waves eager for a taste of glory, wealth and adventure. The risks were high, but the profits, if successful, were even greater.

It became obvious that true wealth lay in trade and an abundance of chartered companies began to pop up around the country. Making perilous journeys to plant their flags in far-off exotic lands, traders brought a stream of valuable eastern spices, pepper, nutmeg, wine, precious stones, dyes and even slaves pouring into England.

It was an era of exploration, an era of change; a time when a lowly sailor with an adventurous spirit could make his fortune if he was daring enough to take it. There was a new world to explore, and it seemed like the entire world order could change as quickly as the wind.

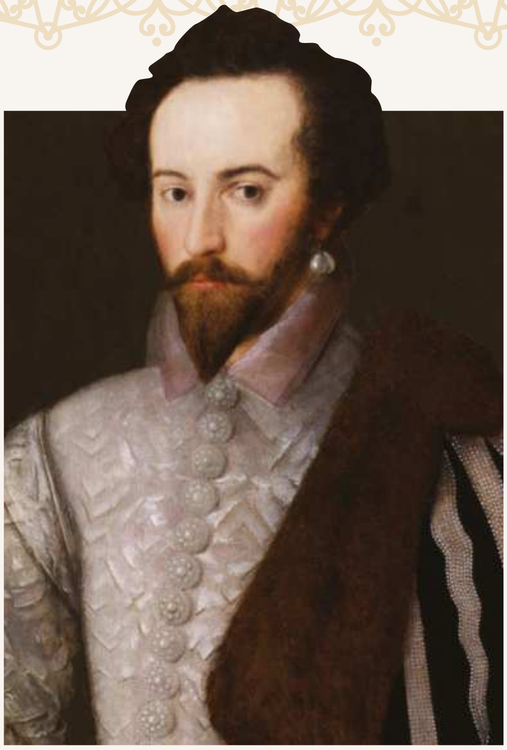
> "Armed with new navigation tools, English sailors were finally bold enough to sail beyond the sight of land and into the open seas"



Raleigh and his men attacking a Spanish fort

The pirate knight

Writer, courtier, spy, Walter Raleigh used his favour with the queen to wipe out his Spanish rivals



The life story of Sir Walter Raleigh is one of glittering highs and devastating lows. It perfectly encapsulates how, in the age of exploration, one person's fate could be changed, for better or worse, in a mere instant.

Born into moderate influence, Raleigh was the youngest son of a highly Protestant family. Educated at Oxford University, it seemed he was set for an academic life, but when the French religious civil wars broke out, he left the country to serve with the Huguenots against King Charles IX of France. However, it was his participation in the Desmond Rebellions in Ireland that would forever alter his life.

When uprisings broke out in Munster, Raleigh fought in the queen's army to suppress the rebels. His ruthlessness in punishing the rebels at the Siege of Smerwick in 1580 and his subsequent seizure of lands saw him become a powerful landowner and, most importantly, it caught the attention of the queen.

Oozing natural charm and wit, Raleigh became a frequent visitor to the Royal Court and he soon became a firm favourite of Elizabeth. She bestowed her beloved courtier with large estates and even a knighthood. Her deep trust in Raleigh was demonstrated in 1587, when she made him Captain of the Queen's Guard.

It is no surprise then that when Raleigh suggested colonising America, it was supported wholeheartedly by the queen, who granted him trade privileges to do just that. From 1584 to 1589, Raleigh led several voyages to the New World; he explored from North Carolina to Florida and bestowed it with the name 'Virginia' in honour of the virgin queen. His attempts to establish colonies, however, ended in failure. His settlement at Roanoke Island especially was a disaster, as the entire colony mysteriously disappeared, their fate unknown to this day.

The Roanoke colony was not the only one to experience a disastrous end - Raleigh's relationship with the queen was destroyed when she discovered his secret marriage to one of her own ladies in waiting. Not only was she 11 years younger than him, but she was also pregnant. Furious that he had failed to obtain her permission, and likely a little jealous, Elizabeth had Raleigh imprisoned and his wife cast out of court.

Upon his release, Raleigh was eager to reclaim favour with the monarch so led a mission to search for the legendary city of gold - El Dorado. Although

> "It is no surprise then that when Raleigh suggested colonising America, it was supported wholeheartedly by the queen"

Ship's log

Tudor ships explored the world for riches, but the journey was anything but luxurious

7 February 1595

Rats have infested the ship, making the deck even more uncomfortable and cramped to sleep on. After the vicious winds last night, the sails have been repaired and the water pumped out of the ship. Luckily my backgammon set was not harmed.

15 March 1595

Supplies running low. Hardtack biscuits are completely riddled with maggots and worms but, with nothing else, there is no choice but to eat them. Water no longer suitable to drink, so must survive on beer alone.

18 April 1595

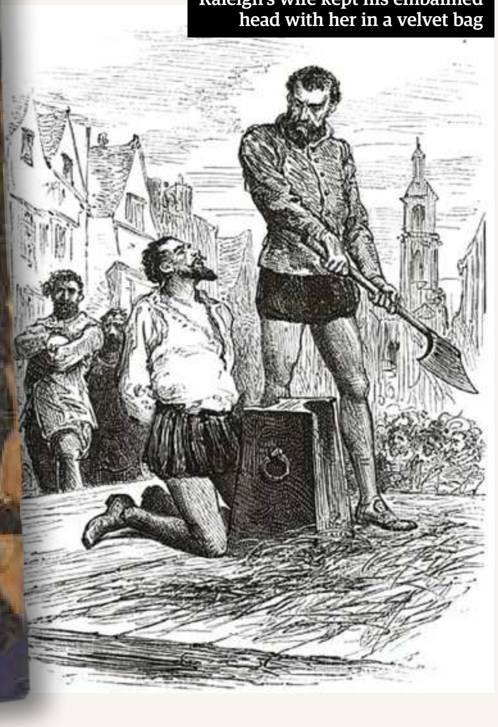
Many of the men have fallen victim to scurvy. The doctor is unable to do much to ease their symptoms. Their teeth are falling out and sores have broken out all over their bodies. Some cases became so severe that several men have died. We threw the corpses overboard.

2 June 1595

The men are getting restless and rebellious. One had to be flogged after speaking back to an officer. Another was keelhauled – tied to a line looped around the ship, thrown overboard and dragged under the vessel. The barnacles cut him up so terribly that he lost an arm.

29 June 1595

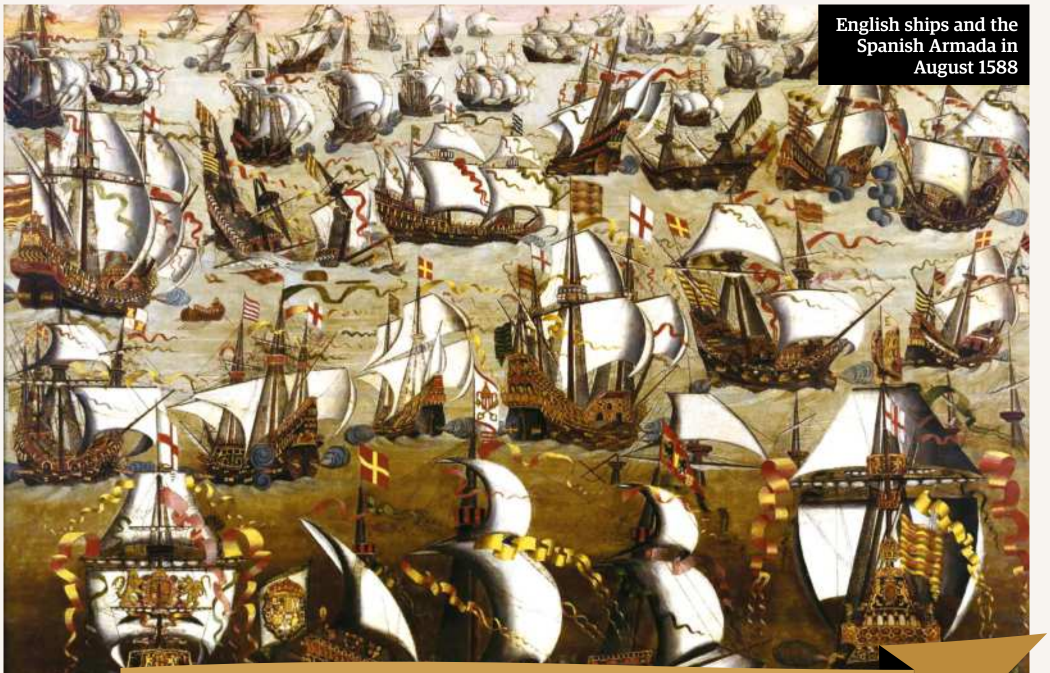
Saw some driftwood today, and another officer informed me he saw a seabird. We may be close to land. This completely contradicts the map we were given (again), so new instructions will need to be drawn up if land is spotted.



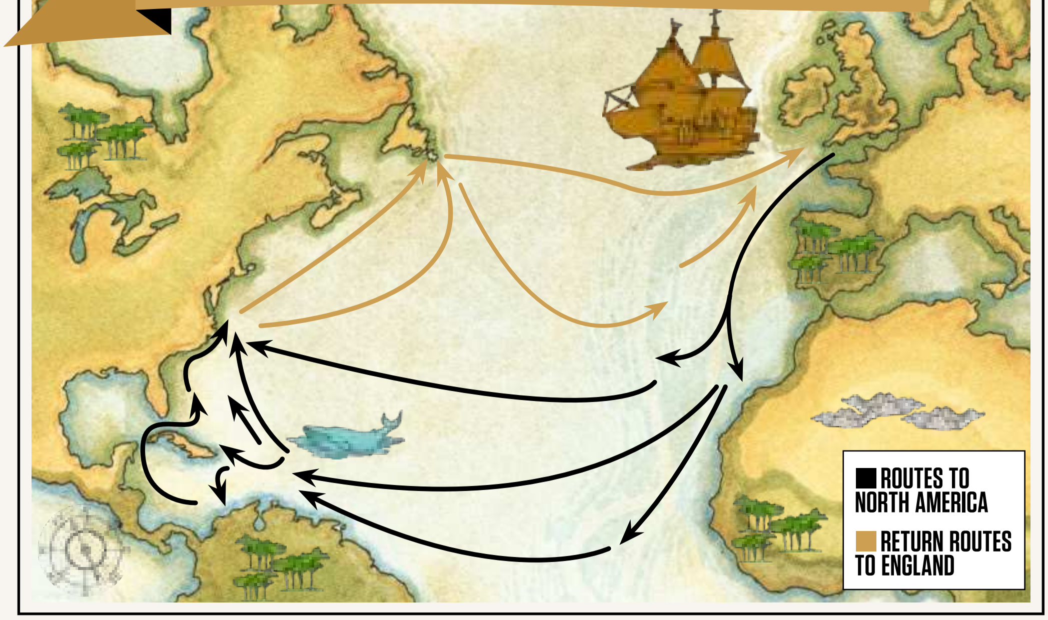
It is said that after his death, Raleigh's wife kept his embalmed head with her in a velvet bag his accounts would claim otherwise, he did not find the city of legend, but instead explored modern-day Guyana and Venezuela. His attack on the powerful Spanish Port of Cadiz and attempts to destroy the newly formed Spanish Armada helped to gradually win back favour with Elizabeth.

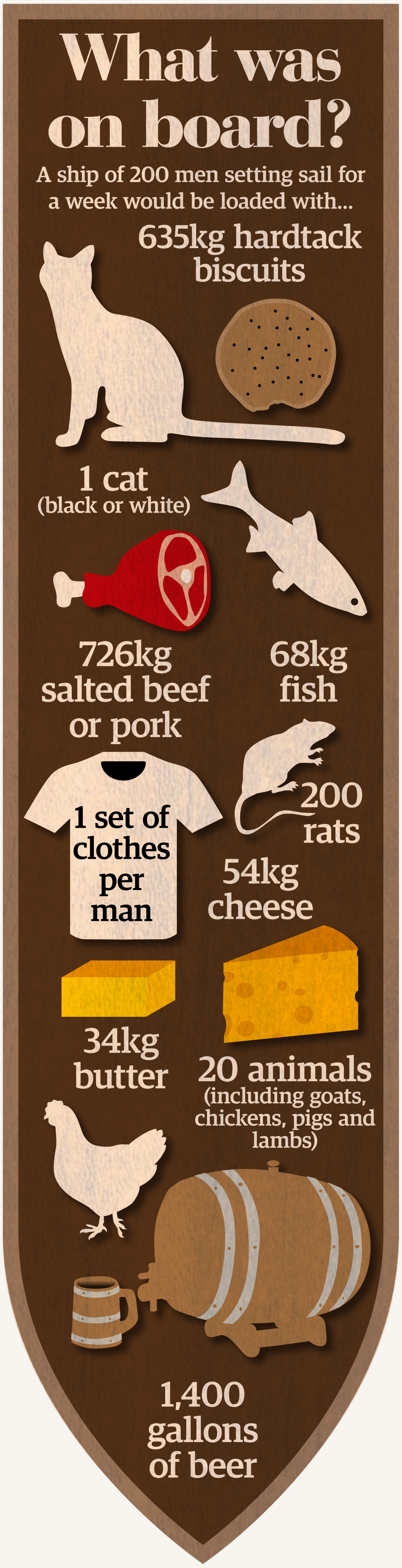
When Elizabeth died and James I came to the throne in 1603, Raleigh must have realised his time was up. His ruthless spirit and charm had won him a soft spot in the English queen's heart, but the Scottish king took an immediate dislike to him. Raleigh was arrested and imprisoned in the Tower of London less than a year after James's ascension. He was found guilty of treason, but was spared from his death sentence and committed to life imprisonment. In 1616 he was released by the money-hungry king to, yet again, search for the fabled city of gold, which his own accounts had helped make into a legend.

During the expedition, he disobeyed James's orders and attacked a Spanish outpost. Spain was furious, and in order to appease them, James had no choice but to punish the rebellious adventurer. Raleigh was re-arrested and his sentence was finally carried out. Bold and cunning to the end, Raleigh reportedly said to his executioner: "This is sharp medicine, but it is a cure for all diseases. What dost thou fear? Strike, man, strike."


English ships and the Spanish Armada in August 1588

Raleigh's voyages

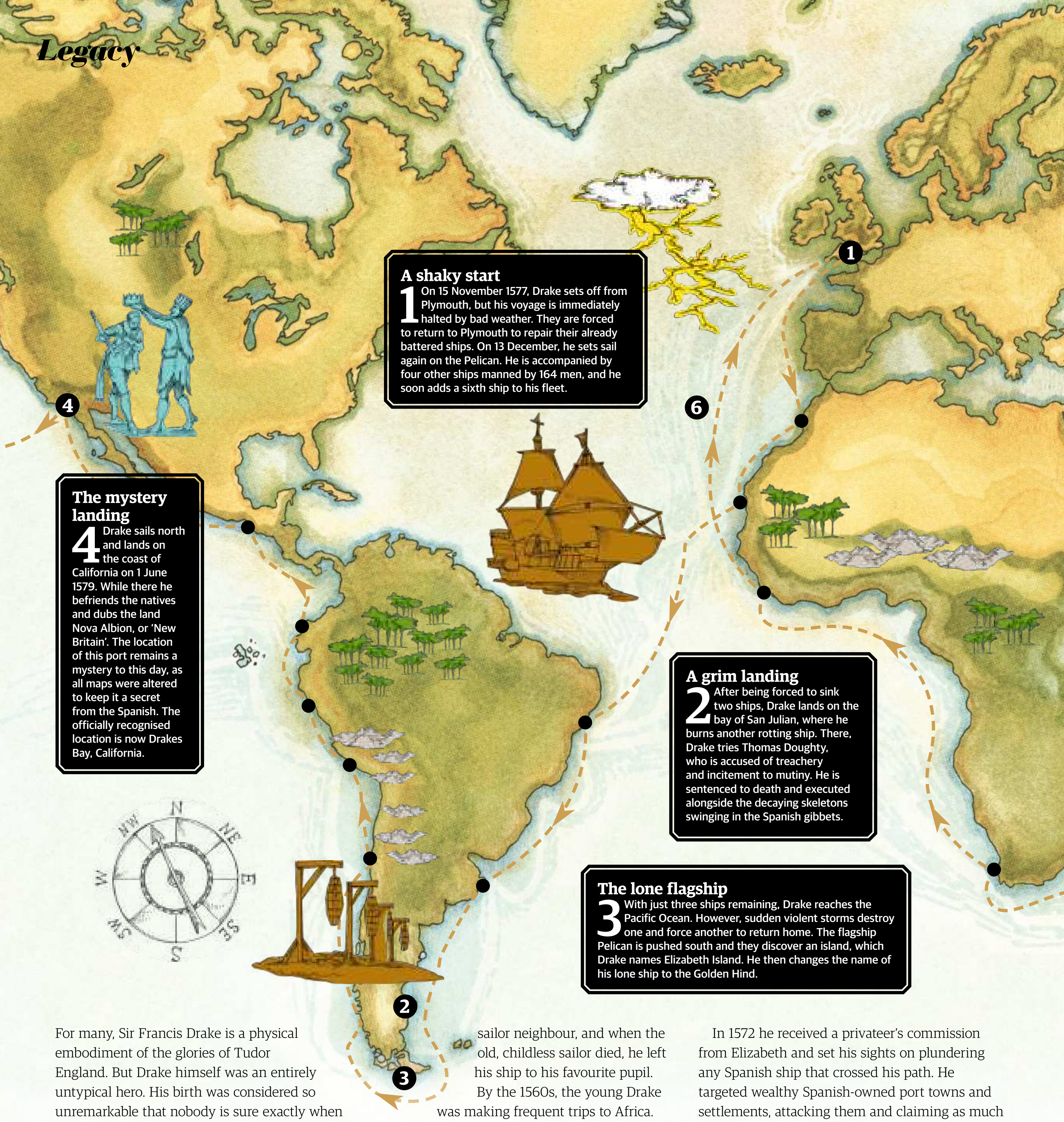




What was on board?

A ship of 200 men setting sail for a week would be loaded with...

- 635kg hardtack biscuits
- 1 cat (black or white)
- 726kg salted beef or pork
- 68kg fish
- 1 set of clothes per man
- 200 rats
- 54kg cheese
- 34kg butter
- 20 animals (including goats, chickens, pigs and lambs)
- 1,400 gallons of beer



A shaky start

1 On 15 November 1577, Drake sets off from Plymouth, but his voyage is immediately halted by bad weather. They are forced to return to Plymouth to repair their already battered ships. On 13 December, he sets sail again on the Pelican. He is accompanied by four other ships manned by 164 men, and he soon adds a sixth ship to his fleet.

A grim landing

2 After being forced to sink two ships, Drake lands on the bay of San Julian, where he burns another rotting ship. There, Drake tries Thomas Doughty, who is accused of treachery and incitement to mutiny. He is sentenced to death and executed alongside the decaying skeletons swinging in the Spanish gibbets.

The lone flagship

3 With just three ships remaining, Drake reaches the Pacific Ocean. However, sudden violent storms destroy one and force another to return home. The flagship Pelican is pushed south and they discover an island, which Drake names Elizabeth Island. He then changes the name of his lone ship to the Golden Hind.

The mystery landing

4 Drake sails north and lands on the coast of California on 1 June 1579. While there he befriends the natives and dubs the land Nova Albion, or 'New Britain'. The location of this port remains a mystery to this day, as all maps were altered to keep it a secret from the Spanish. The officially recognised location is now Drakes Bay, California.

For many, Sir Francis Drake is a physical embodiment of the glories of Tudor England. But Drake himself was an entirely untypical hero. His birth was considered so unremarkable that nobody is sure exactly when it was. He came from a very ordinary family; he was the eldest of 12 sons, and his father was a humble farmer. When the staunchly Catholic Queen Mary I ascended the throne and began to persecute Protestants, the family fled from Devonshire to Kent, where his father became a preacher. It seemed that fate itself wished to place Drake on a ship, as he was apprenticed to their sailor neighbour, and when the old, childless sailor died, he left his ship to his favourite pupil.

By the 1560s, the young Drake was making frequent trips to Africa. There, he would capture slaves and sell them in New Spain. This was against Spanish law and in 1568 his fleet was trapped by Spaniards in the Mexican port of San Juan de Ulua. Although Drake managed to escape, many of his men were killed. This incident instilled a deep hatred in Drake towards the Spanish crown that would last throughout his entire life.

In 1572 he received a privateer's commission from Elizabeth and set his sights on plundering any Spanish ship that crossed his path. He targeted wealthy Spanish-owned port towns and settlements, attacking them and claiming as much gold and silver as he could load on to his ships.

It was Drake who, when discovering that he had too much gold to carry, decided to bury it and reclaim it later. This was not the only comparison made between Drake and pirates. Although in England his success had seen him become a wealthy and respected explorer, this was not the case in Spain. To the Spaniards whose ships

Dragon of the seas

The Spanish had circumnavigated the globe decades before, but English explorer Francis Drake threatened to destroy their success

The Hind lives on

5 Drake reaches a group of islands in the southwest Pacific known as the Moluccas. After a close shave in which the Golden Hind is almost lost after being caught on a reef, Drake befriends the sultan king of the islands.

The valiant return

6 On 26 September 1580, the Golden Hind finally returns to Plymouth with Drake and the 59 remaining crewmembers onboard. The queen receives half of the treasures and spices loaded onto the ship. In return, Elizabeth gives Drake a jewel with her miniature portrait, now known as the 'Drake Jewel'.

Tudor Navigation

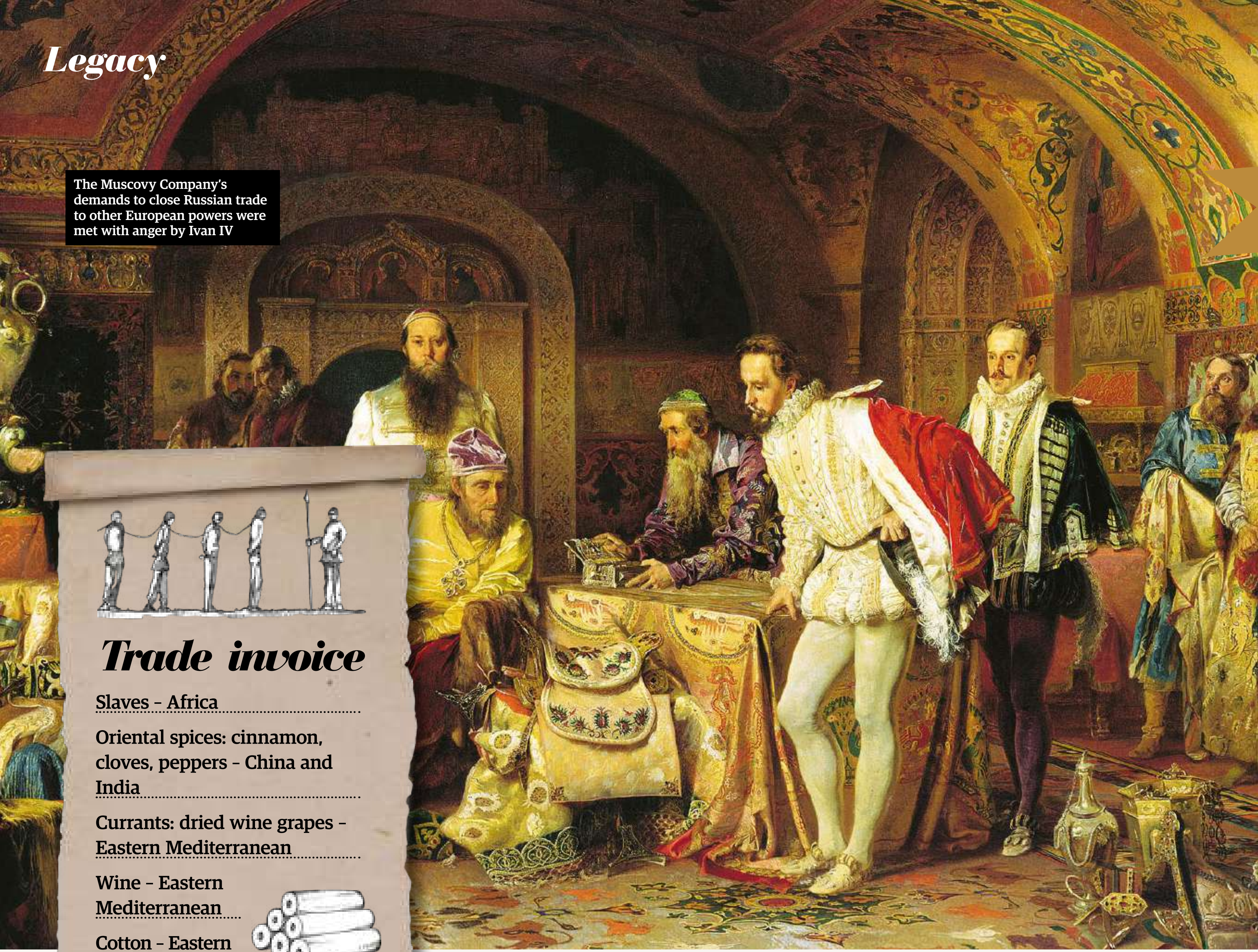
Although Tudor sailors liked to paint themselves as masters of the seas, their navigation tools were rather primitive and a lot of guesswork was involved. Maps did exist, but they were often incorrect, as much land was undiscovered. Compasses were used for direction and an instrument called a nocturnal was used to determine the alignment of the stars, which helped to calculate tides. The term 'knots' came from a Tudor method to calculate the speed of a ship – a piece of wood attached to a rope with knots in it was cast out and the knots counted as they passed through a sailor's fingers. Another sailor used a sandglass to determine how many knots were travelled in a period of time.

he had plundered, Drake became a bloodthirsty figure to be feared; they even gave him the terrifying nickname 'El Draque' – the Dragon.

Dragon or not, the daring and bountiful voyages of the English adventurer had impressed Queen Elizabeth I. He perfectly epitomised the kind of pioneering English spirit that she felt her country needed to ensure it became a major world power. In 1577, she sent Drake on an expedition against the Spanish along the Pacific coast of South America. He raided the Spanish settlements in his usual ruthless style and, after plundering Spanish ships along the coasts of Chile and Peru, he landed in California and claimed it for his queen. His journey continued through the Indian Ocean and when he finally returned to England on 26 September 1580, he became the first Englishman to circumnavigate the world. This delighted the queen, but what pleased her even more were the pretty jewels that he bestowed her with. In a move that insulted the king of Spain, she dined onboard the explorer's ship, bestowed him with a jewel of her own and gave him a knighthood.

Drake's formidable success at the expense of Spain did not end there. In 1588 he was made vice admiral of the Navy, and when 130 Spanish Armada ships entered the English Channel, he fought them back with relish. Now, he wasn't only a wealthy explorer and royal favourite, he was also a war hero.

However, in 1596 his luck finally ran out. The queen requested him to engage his old enemy Spain one last time and in a mission to capture the Spanish treasure in Panama, Drake contracted dysentery and died. His body was placed in a lead coffin and cast out to sea. His enduring legacy remains, and to this day divers continue to search for the coffin of the man who led Elizabethan England to glory.



The Muscovy Company's demands to close Russian trade to other European powers were met with anger by Ivan IV

Treasures of the empire

A world full of riches awaited to make England a wealthy and powerful nation once again

When it came to trade, England had some catching up to do. For a long time, Italian spice and dye traders dominated the seas, but the Italian monopoly that had existed on trade was finally broken by Spain and Portugal. In their efforts to loosen the Italian hold on trade, these traders discovered sea routes to the Indies and the hugely valuable spices that lay beyond. England looked on greedily as Spain grew wealthier and wealthier and became determined to share in the riches that were on offer in the New World. If England failed to get a foothold in the exploration of the New World, its European rivals would leave it behind and the nation would be left vulnerable. Trade didn't just mean riches anymore - it meant survival. But a chance discovery changed everything.

After an English spy gained a copy of *Breve Compendio De La Sphera*, a secret Spanish textbook that held the secrets to success at sea, craftsmen began designing new instruments and English explorers were finally ready to take to the waves. Queen Elizabeth supported the voyages of these intrepid explorers and expressed that she would not disapprove if they were to take advantage of richly laden Spanish ships while doing so. Soon, English adventurers gained a reputation for piracy, although the raids were conducted not by pirates but by 'privateers'. Spanish ships in the Caribbean trembled in terror upon the sight of an English galleon on the horizon. A new world was dawning, and using their cunning, daring and ruthlessness, English traders would come to rule it.

Trade invoice

Slaves - Africa

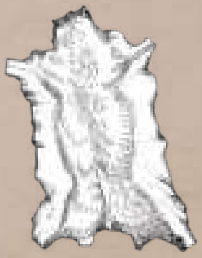
Oriental spices: cinnamon, cloves, peppers - China and India

Currants: dried wine grapes - Eastern Mediterranean

Wine - Eastern Mediterranean

Cotton - Eastern Mediterranean

Silk - Eastern Mediterranean



Cordage - Russia

Hemp - Russia

Furs - Russia

Carpets - Turkey

Silk - Persia

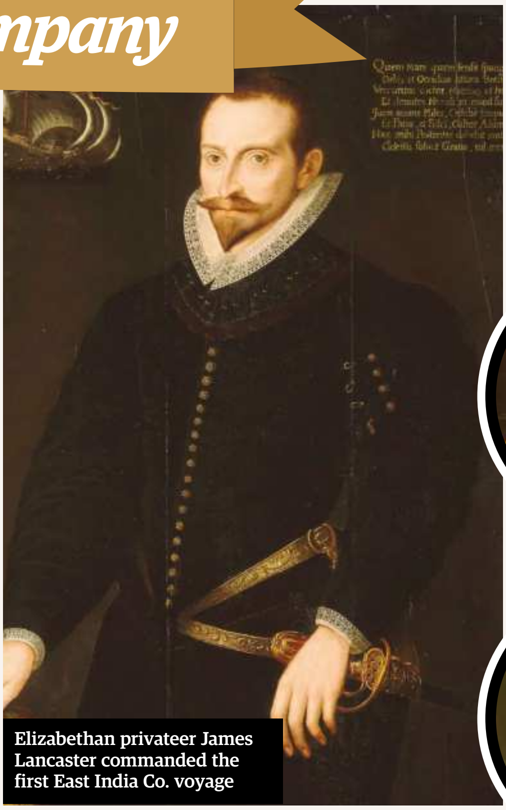
Fruit - Mediterranean

Sugar - North Africa

The East India Company

The tiny English company that came to control half of all the world's trade

When Queen Elizabeth granted a Royal Charter to the traders that would become the East India Trading Company, it's doubtful she could foresee the impact it would have upon the world. The 15-year charter permitted the fledgling company a monopoly on trade with countries east of the Cape of Good Hope and west of the Straits of Magellan, but they were motivated by one thing - spices. But the Dutch East India Company had the monopoly and the small English company had to work from the bottom up, slowly gaining income and respect. Eventually the company's trade in spices, cotton and silk saw profits pour in. Just 47 years after its creation, the little business morphed into a giant. For many, the pioneering nature of the company was symbolic of the spirit of exploration, tearing down the barriers of the world. But as the company became more powerful, its ambitions grew in kind. The initial focus on trade morphed into dangerous colonial aspirations that would lead to the company's eventual downfall.



Elizabethan privateer James Lancaster commanded the first East India Co. voyage

A 1593 map of Muscovy

Expanding east

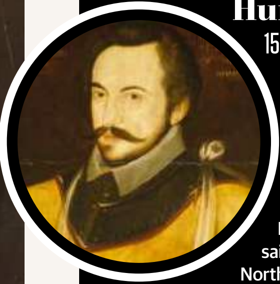
The East India Company weren't the only English traders to rule the seas

Although the East India Trading Company was a major player in the arena of English trade, many other companies were making waves worldwide. The first major chartered joint stock company was the Muscovy Company, focusing on trade between England and Muscovy, modern-day Russia. Trading with this mysterious state in the frozen tundra involved perilous journeys that left one crew frozen, but when Richard Chancellor finally made it to Moscow he found a market eager to trade. English wool was exchanged for Russian fur and an array of valuable goods. The Muscovy Company even led to a marriage proposal from Ivan the Terrible to Elizabeth.

Another major English chartered company was the Levant, or Turkey, Company, drawn to the Ottoman empire by the lure of exotic spices. The Levant Company amassed a small fortune trading in silk and valuable currants. What set the Levant Company apart was that the leaders never appeared to have colonial ambitions, instead working closely with the sultan. This allowed for a relationship of mutual benefit.

Forgotten Tudor explorers

The men whose voyages carved the world for England



Humphrey Gilbert

1539-1583

Half brother of Sir Walter Raleigh, Gilbert's voyages established St John's Newfoundland, the most eastern province of Canada, in 1583. An early pioneer of the English colonial empire in North America, Gilbert initially sailed to find a sea route through North America to Asia.

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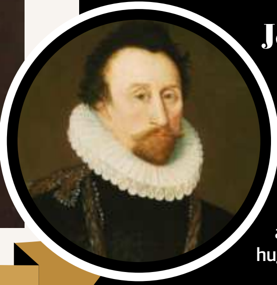

John Hawkins

1532-1595

Cousin of Francis Drake, Hawkins was not only chief architect of the Navy but also conducted several voyages to West Africa and South America. Hawkins was a trade pioneer and made a huge profit from the slave trade.

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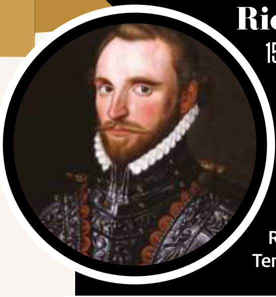

Richard Grenville

1542-1591

An English war hero, Grenville was a major part of early attempts to settle in the New World. He attempted to set up colonies in Roanoke Island and his daring death aboard his ship Revenge is immortalised in Tennyson's poem *The Revenge*.

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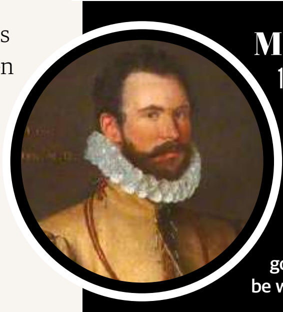

Martin Frobisher

1535/1539-1594

Frobisher was determined to find a north-west passage as a trade route to India and China, and made three voyages in an effort to do so. The privateer collected what he believed was 1,550 tons of gold, but actually turned out to be worthless iron pyrite.

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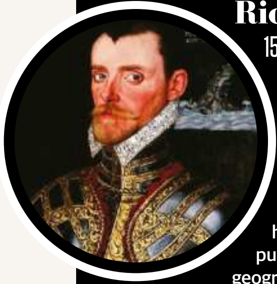
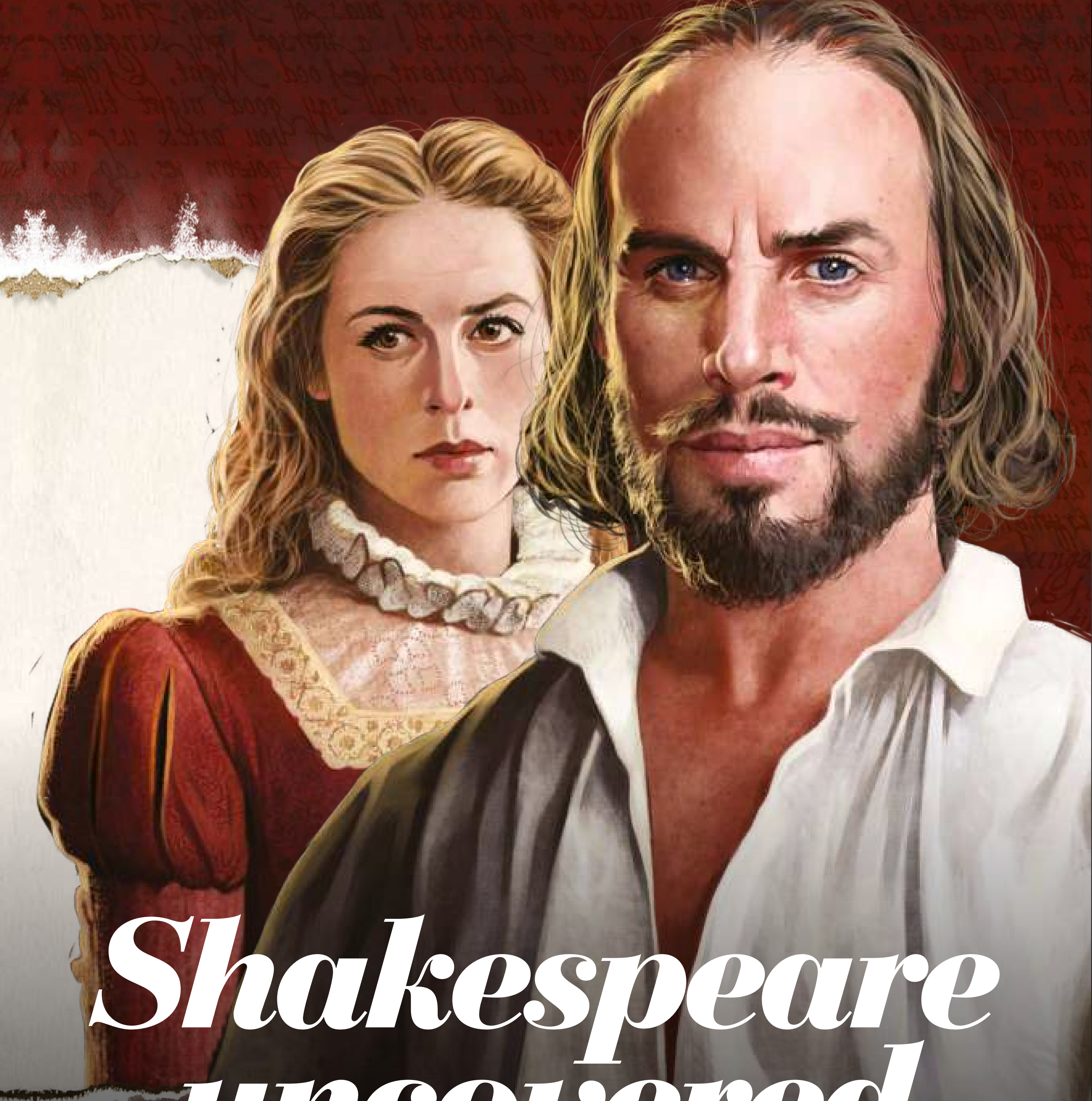


Richard Hawkins

1562-1622

Son of John Hawkins, he set sail to prey on the possessions of the Spanish crown in South America. Although his plundering of Spanish towns strongly suggest otherwise, he maintained that the purpose of the expedition was geographical discovery.

© Alamy; Look & Learn; Joe Cummings; Abigail Daker



Shakespeare uncovered

His plays are applauded across the globe, but very little is known about the life of our beloved bard. Was he as honourable as we've been led to believe?

Written by Alicea Francis

You'd be hard pressed to find a soul in Britain – or the Western world, for that matter – who hasn't heard of William Shakespeare. Poet, playwright, actor, and widely considered the greatest writer England has ever seen, he can lay claim to 37 plays, 154 sonnets and two narrative poems. His plays have been translated into every major living language and they are performed more often than those of any other writer in history.

Most will be able to name a play written by him, many will be able to recite a few lines, and some will even remember entire sonnets. But ask a person on the street about his life and you're unlikely to get much of an answer beyond the fact that he was born in Stratford upon Avon, and eventually moved to London to pursue his theatrical career. Even those who have devoted their lives to studying Shakespeare can not say with any surety what he did during those years leading up to the performance of his first play, nor do they know much about his life beyond the theatre. We don't even know his date of birth. Many of the claims made about him are based on uncorroborated signatures in guest books and reports made years after his death.

But from the few precious documents we know to be authentic, there is much to be deduced. By combining our knowledge of the time with logic and reasoning, we can make some well-informed guesses about the life of the man who has come to define the English language. With the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death having taken place on 23 April 2016, we pieced together the evidence to find out if there is any truth to the claims of adultery, heresy and fraud that have tarnished his reputation.

The Shakespeares' fall from grace

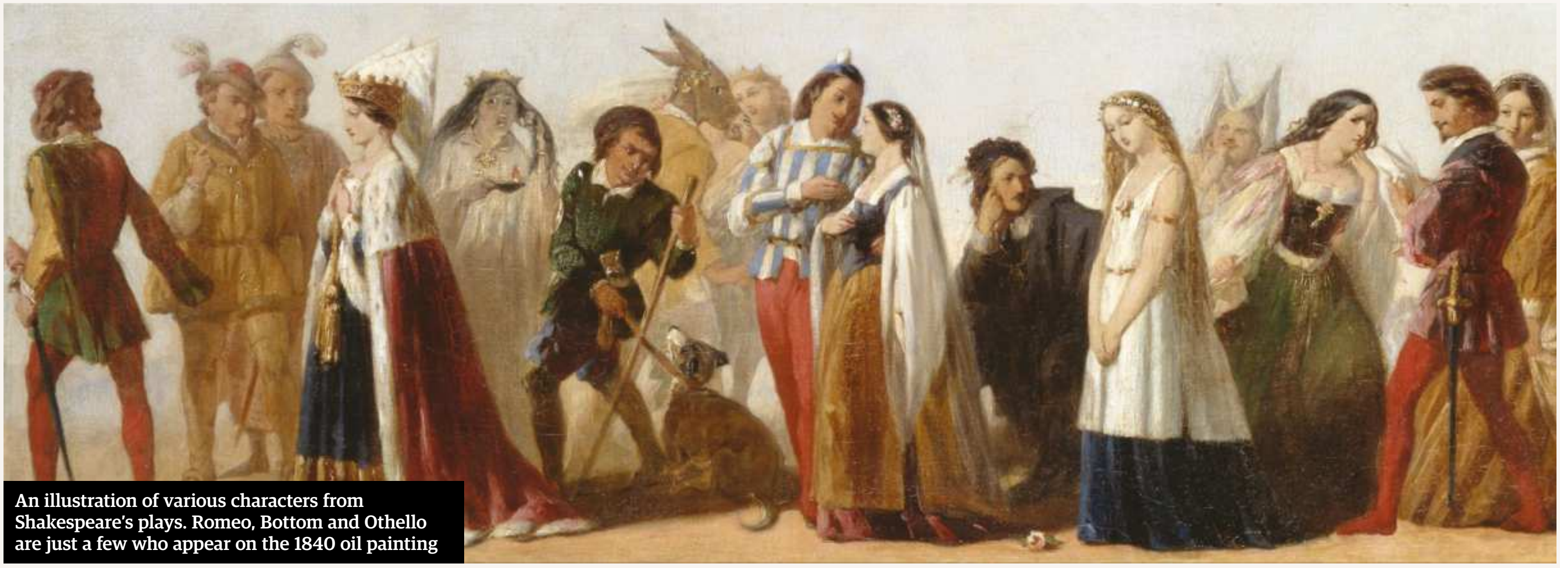
While we don't know the exact date of Shakespeare's birth, we do know he was born in Stratford upon Avon, England, and baptised there on 26 April 1564. His parents were John Shakespeare, a well-to-do glover and leather worker, and Mary Arden, the daughter of an affluent farmer. He was the third child of eight, and the eldest surviving son. Given his family's social standing, it's likely that William attended the local grammar, King's New School. Here he would have studied Latin and the works of classical authors. He left school at the age of 14, without going on to university as would have been expected. What he did for the next four years – now considered his 'First Lost Years' – we do not know.

What we do know is that around the time of leaving school, Shakespeare's father had fallen on hard times. Prior to this, John had been successful in both his own enterprises and civic life. He had begun his municipal career in 1556 when he was elected borough ale taster, a job that undoubtedly would have made him the envy of the town, and was appointed high bailiff of Stratford, the modern-day equivalent of mayor, in 1568. However, by the late 1570s, he had stopped attending council meetings, and he was prosecuted for illegal dealing in wool and lending money with excess interest. This would likely have had a devastating effect on his finances. Might William have been forced to end his education prematurely in order to help support his family?

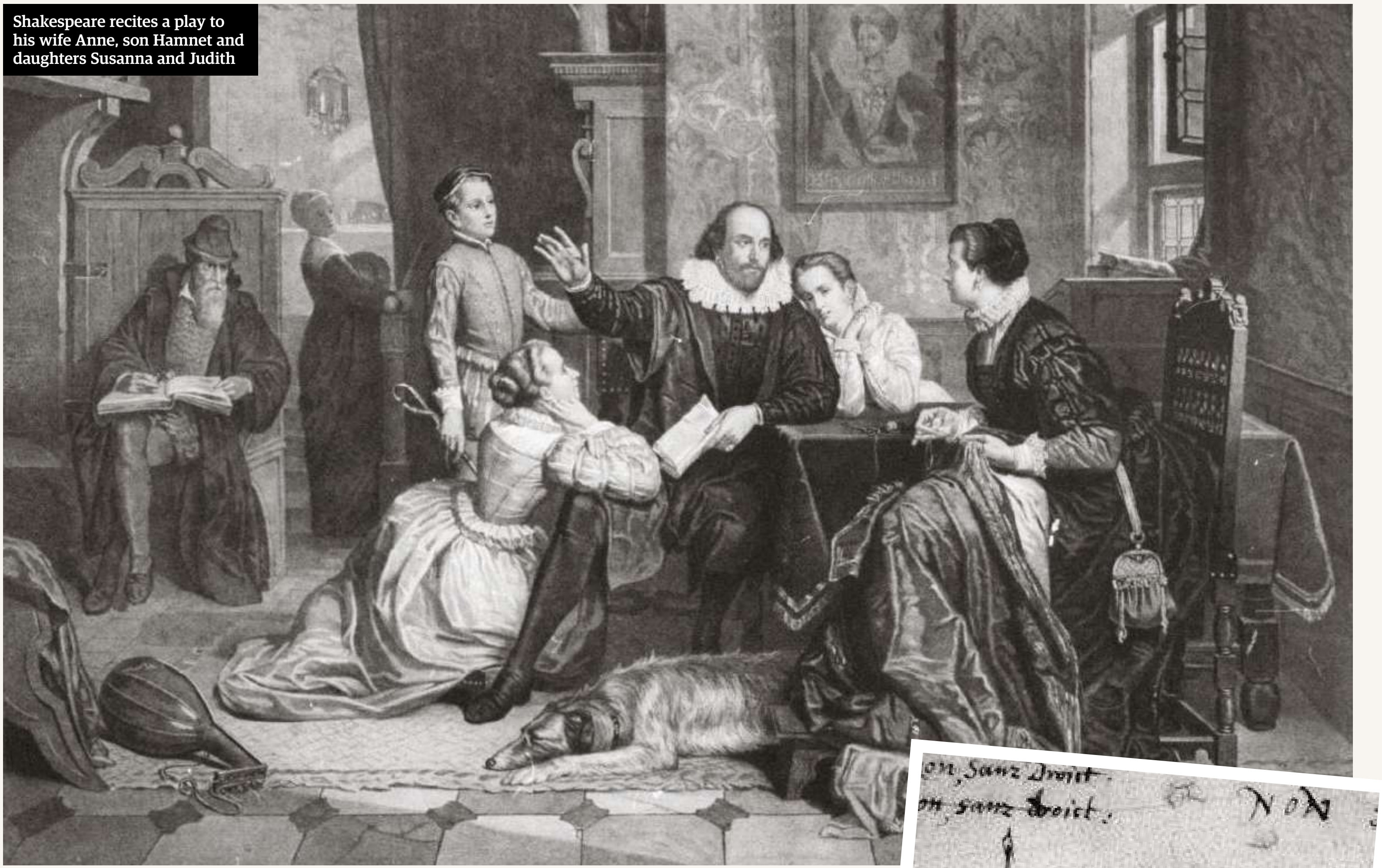
Whatever happened, on 28 November 1582, a marriage bond was granted to 'William Shagspere' and 'Anne Hathwey' of Stratford. Bizarrely, the previous day a marriage license had been issued to 'Wm Shaxpere' and 'Anne Whateley'. Several conclusions have been drawn from this, the most eyebrow-raising being that Shakespeare was in love with one woman but obliged to marry another. It's true 26-year-old Anne Hathaway was three months pregnant with Shakespeare's child when they married, so could it have been that he was coerced into doing so? Other theories hold more weight, one being that Wm Shaxpere and Anne Whateley were completely different people, and another that this was simply the mistake of a careless clerk; the name 'Whateley' appears on the same page of the register in a tithe appeal by a vicar.

The Shakespeares' first child, Susanna, was born on 26 May 1583, and twins Hamnet and Judith were baptised on 2 February 1585. It is after this time that Shakespeare once again gets lost in history. He clearly had responsibilities to his family, but there are no sources to hint at what he was doing professionally. Politically, in 1586, the Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots, cousin of Elizabeth I, was tried for treason and executed the following year, while in 1588 the Spanish Armada was defeated by the English. We know that Shakespeare was in Stratford in 1589 as he was involved in a legal dispute over some land. But at what point he began writing and left for London, we have no idea. All we know is that on 3 March 1592, Shakespeare's first recorded performance was made in London.

> "We pieced together the evidence to find out if there is any truth to the claims of adultery, heresy and fraud that have tarnished his reputation"



An illustration of various characters from Shakespeare's plays. Romeo, Bottom and Othello are just a few who appear on the 1840 oil painting



Shakespeare recites a play to his wife Anne, son Hamnet and daughters Susanna and Judith

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NON

Lust and loathing in the city of sin

By the time of Shakespeare's first recorded performance at the Rose Theatre in London, the young bard was well established enough to have evoked criticism from other playwrights. One, Robert Greene, described him as an "upstart crow", accusing Shakespeare of reaching above his rank in trying to match university-educated writers like Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson. Philip Henslowe, the owner of the Rose, noted that Lord Strange's Men gave 15 performances of *Henry VI* and earned £3.16s.8d, making it extremely successful for its time. So we know in the years leading up to this, Shakespeare must been busy perfecting his craft and building a reputation for himself.

However, in late 1592, bubonic plague broke out in London. This spelled disaster for the theatres, many of which were forced to close completely until 1594 while the troupes toured the country to survive. After the death of Lord Strange in 1594, his players disbanded and reorganised into another troupe, under the patronage of the Lord

Shakespeare's lost years

The theories

There are two periods of Shakespeare's life for which we have no evidence of his whereabouts or pursuits. These include the time between him leaving school and marrying Anne Hathaway (1578-82), and the time after the birth of his children leading up to the first performance of *Henry VI* in London (1585-92). It is the Second Lost Years that intrigue historians the most, because this is the time when he would have been perfecting his craft and establishing himself as a dramatist. No one knows for sure what he was up to, but there have been plenty of guesses about where he was.

The pilgrim

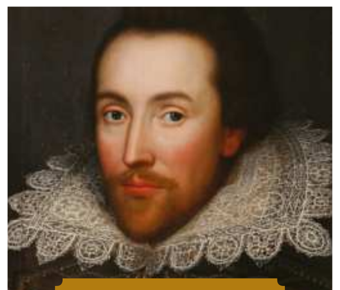
A 16th-century guest book signed by pilgrims to Rome reveals three cryptic signatures thought to be Shakespeare's. This has led some to believe that he spent his lost years in Italy, perhaps to escape the persecution of Catholics. Fourteen of his plays are set there, so it may not be as outlandish a claim as it sounds.

The soldier

During Shakespeare's lost years, England was under constant threat from invasion by the Spanish Armada. A document from 1588 recounts a major recruitment campaign for militiamen in Stratford, leading to suggestions that Shakespeare may have been enticed into signing up. Could this be why he was able to create such vivid scenes of military life?

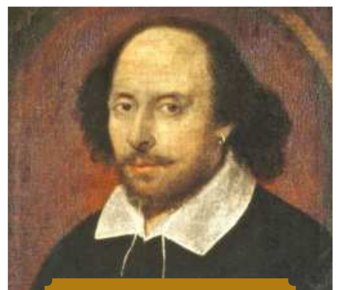
The true face of Shakespeare

Only two depictions of Shakespeare have been officially identified, both made posthumously. The credibility of others may never be known



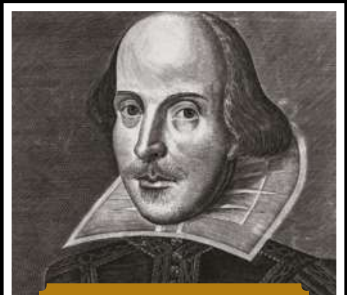
The Cobbe Portrait
1610

Revealed to the public in 2009, the portrait descended into the Cobbe family with a portrait of Shakespeare's patron Henry Wriothesley – the person most likely to have commissioned a painting of him.



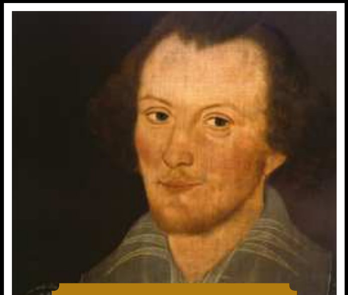
The Chandos Portrait
1600-10

This was believed to have been painted from life by John Taylor, Shakespeare's 'intimate friend', and was owned by his godson William Davenant before finding its way into the hands of the Duke of Chandos.



The Droeshout Portrait
1623

Martin Droeshout engraved this portrait of Shakespeare for the title page of the *First Folio*, a collection of the bard's plays published in 1623. It is the only work of art besides his funerary bust that is definitely identifiable as a depiction of him.



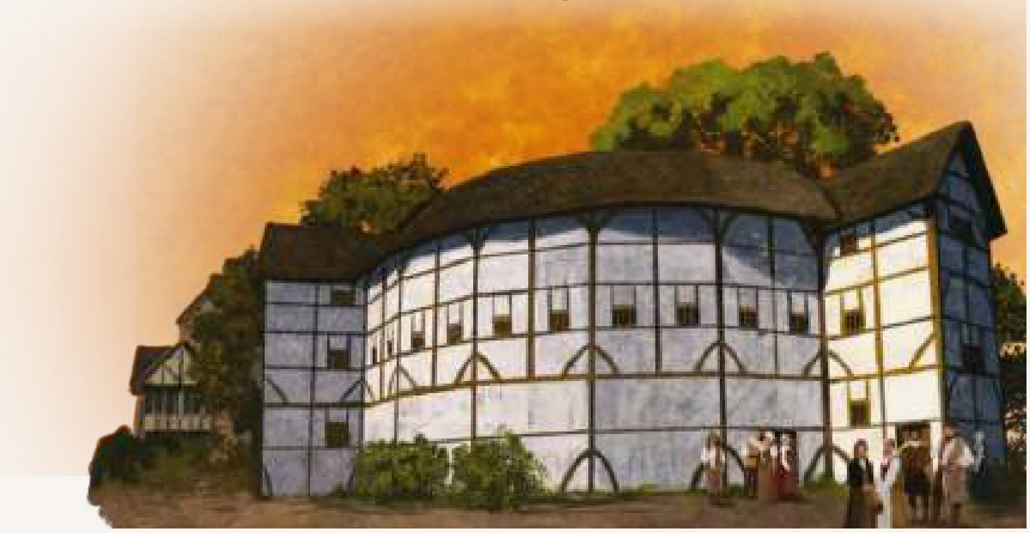
The Sanders Portrait
1603

This has a label identifying it as Shakespeare and stating that it was painted in 1603. New scientific tests on the label and the oak panel suggest that it dates to this time, which if true, would make this likely to be an authentic depiction.

Chamberlain. Shakespeare wrote for this company for most of his career, even acting in some secondary roles. They performed at The Theatre in Shoreditch, as well as at court for Queen Elizabeth I. *A Midsummer's Night Dream* may have been the first play Shakespeare wrote for the new company, which was followed over the next two years by a burst of creativity that spawned *Romeo And Juliet*, *Love's Labours Lost* and *The Merchant Of Venice*.

In 1596, Shakespeare's only son Hamnet died, possibly from the plague. He was 11 years old. Scholars have trawled for evidence to indicate that Shakespeare's work was in some way affected by his son's death; unlike his contemporary Ben Jonson, who published a poem called *On My First Sonne* when his own son died, Shakespeare's literary response - if there were one - was subtler. At the time, he was primarily writing comedies, and it wasn't until several years later that he turned his hand to tragedies. Many have suggested

> "It wasn't until several years later that he turned his hand to tragedies"



The servant

A reference to a 'William Shakeshafte' in the will of Alexander Hoghton, a wealthy Catholic, suggests that Shakespeare may have been a servant for his family in Lancashire. The will also mentioned costumes and musical instruments, supposedly further evidence that Shakeshafte was in fact Shakespeare.

The poacher

The earliest and most common tale originated in 1616 from a Gloucestershire clergyman. He said that Shakespeare poached deer and rabbits on the property of local landowner Sir Thomas Lucy, a man who "had him oft whipped and sometimes imprisoned."

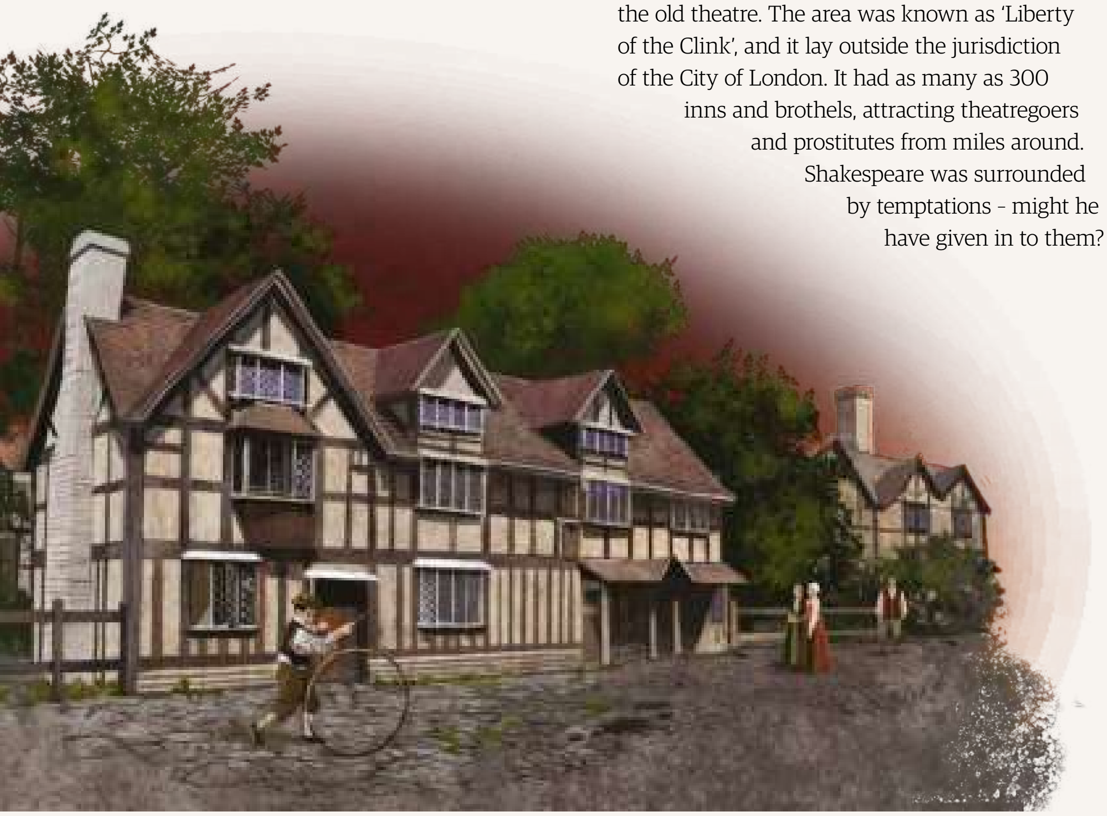
The schoolmaster

17th-century gossip chronicler John Aubrey claimed that Shakespeare had been a teacher, basing this off verbal evidence from the son of one of Shakespeare's contemporaries. There is also evidence that the school in question was owned by Henry Wriothesley, Shakespeare's sponsor.

Shakespeare's Globe, London, as it looked in 2007. The building is a faithful reconstruction of the Globe Theatre that played host to the bard's plays

that Shakespeare's most famous tragedy *Hamlet*, which was written at the turn of the century, was inspired by Hamnet's death. Though the similarity between the two names is evidence enough for many people - Shakespeare even wrote his friend Hamnet Sadler's name as 'Hamlett' in his will - the prince of Denmark's name is most likely derived from the character of 'Amleth' in Saxo Grammaticus's *Vita Amlethi*, the Scandinavian legend upon which *Hamlet* is based.

This begs us to question what Shakespeare's relationship with his family was like. With his wife and children back in Stratford, he must have spent months at a time away from his family, leading to speculation that he had lovers in London. The subject matter of his plays certainly suggests that Shakespeare had a deep understanding of unrequited, forbidden and adulterous love. Was this something he had just observed, or something he had experienced? We know that he lived in Southwark from around 1599, close to the Globe Theatre, which had been built by the Lord Chamberlain's Men using timber from the old theatre. The area was known as 'Liberty of the Clink', and it lay outside the jurisdiction of the City of London. It had as many as 300 inns and brothels, attracting theatregoers and prostitutes from miles around. Shakespeare was surrounded by temptations - might he have given in to them?



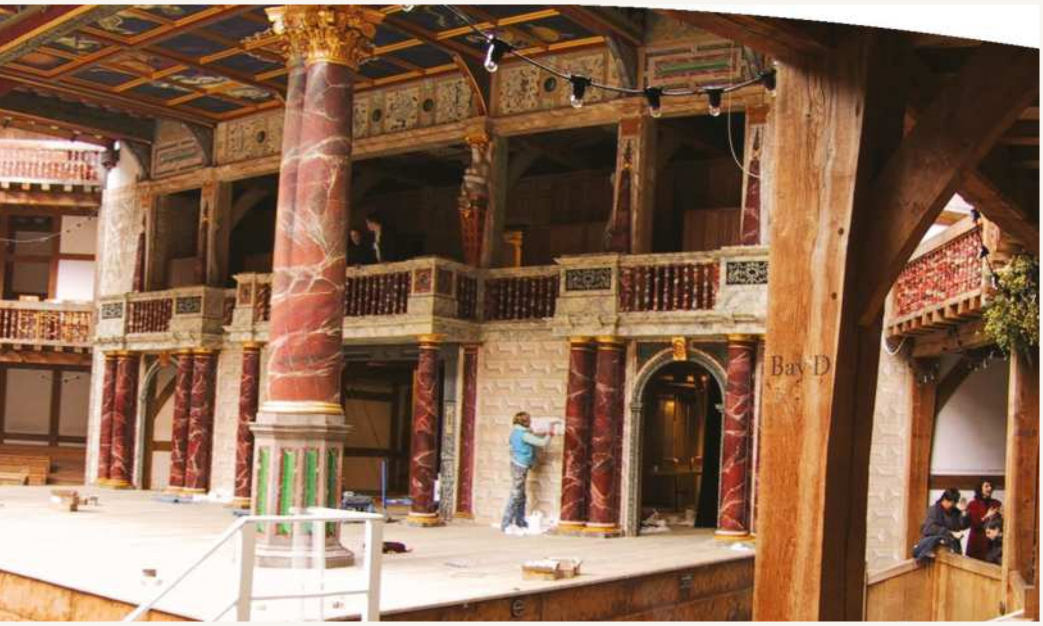
One of the most infamous rumours surrounding the bard is that he had an illegitimate son with the wife of a tavern owner from Oxford. Shakespeare was known to have frequented the inn regularly while journeying between London and Stratford. In 1606, Jane Shepherd Davenant gave birth to a son, William, to whom Shakespeare was godfather. The boy went on to become a poet and playwright, and it was reported he "writ with the very spirit that did Shakespeare, and seemed contented enough to be thought his Son." He was also believed to have called his mother a "whore".

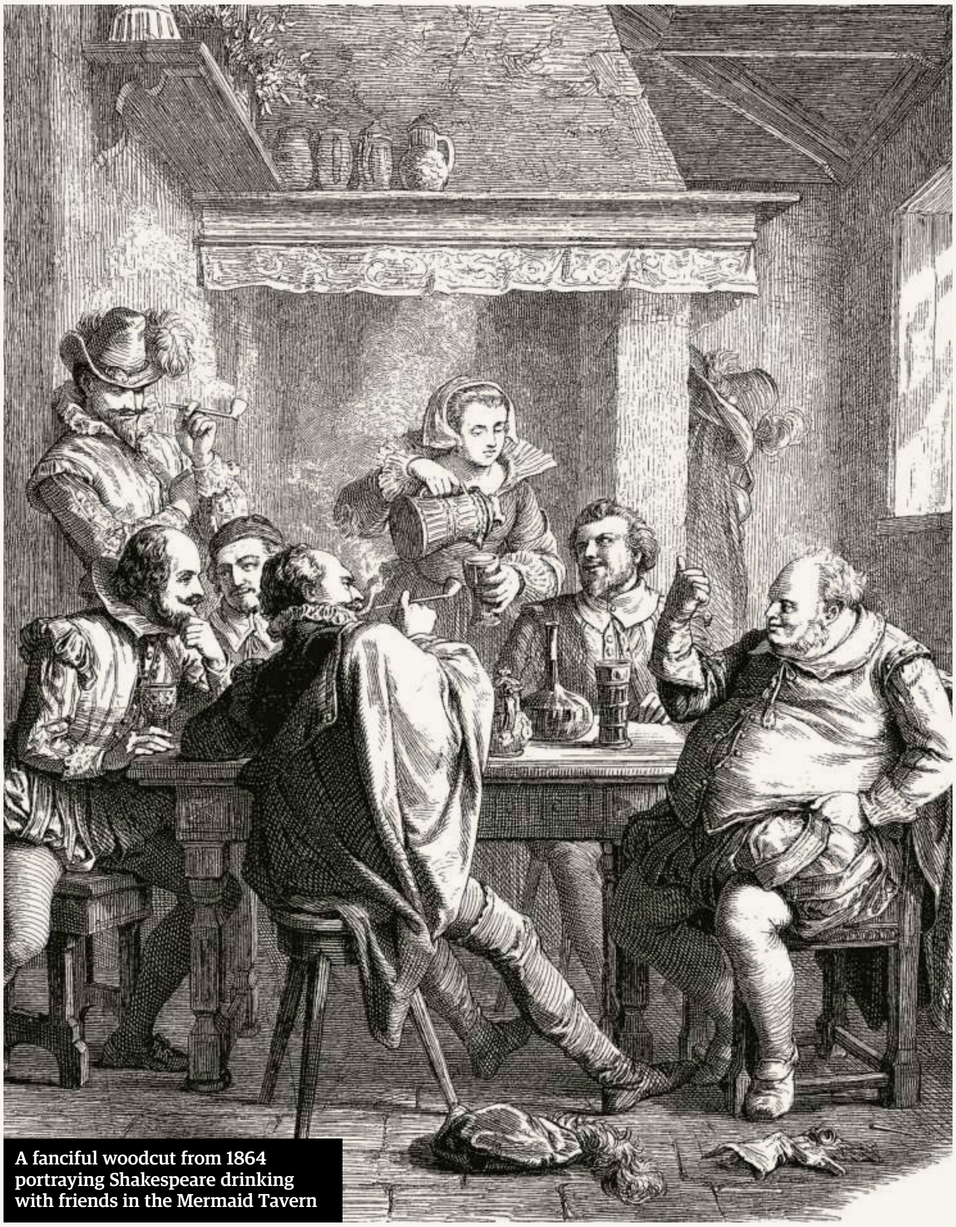
There are even rumours surrounding Shakespeare of homosexuality, probably based on the fact that many of his love poems were dedicated to a young man known as the 'Fair Lord'. The most likely candidate is one of Shakespeare's patrons, but whether this was a romantic gesture or simply a mark of respect is up for debate among historians.

An unexplained death and the edited will

By the early 1600s, Shakespeare was a wealthy man. He was a shareholder in the Lord Chamberlain's Men and owned a 12.5 per cent stake in the Globe. He also invested in property in both London and Stratford, buying the second biggest house in the town along with 107 acres of farmland and a cottage.

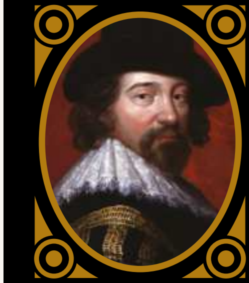
After the death of Queen Elizabeth, Shakespeare's company was awarded a royal patent by King James I (VI of Scotland) and the troupe became the King's Men. It was at this time that he wrote *King Lear*, taking the theme of divided kingdoms to mirror James's new domain, along with *Macbeth* which was probably written to honour the new king's Scottish ancestry.




A fanciful woodcut from 1864 portraying Shakespeare drinking with friends in the Mermaid Tavern

Was Shakespeare a fraud?

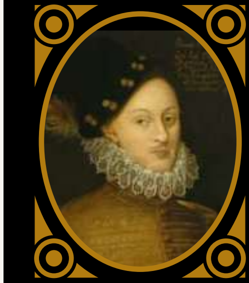
As is often the case with successful people, there have always been those who have sought to discredit Shakespeare with claims that he was purely a front for the plays' real author or authors, who for some reason did not want or could not accept public credit. Possible candidates for the real writer of Shakespeare's works include:



Sir Francis Bacon

1561-1626

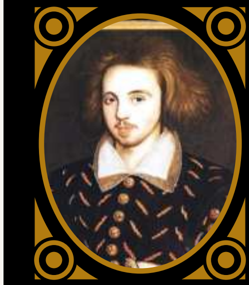
Lawyer, philosopher, essayist and scientist, parallels between Bacon's work and Shakespeare's have led some to argue that he hid messages of support for a republican society in plays co-authored with Shakespeare.



Edward de Vere

1550-1604

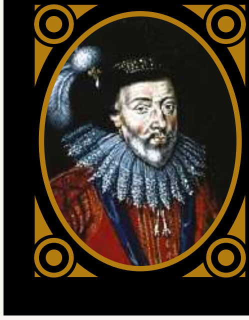
The 17th Earl of Oxford sponsored several companies of actors and was an important courtier poet. It's thought only a man with a knowledge of royal courts, Italy and law could have written plays as well-informed as the bard's.



Christopher Marlowe

1564-93

Perhaps the most outlandish theory is that Marlowe's death was faked to allow him to escape prosecution for atheism. Shakespeare was then chosen as the front behind whom Marlowe would continue writing his plays.



William Stanley

1561-1642

With the same initials as the bard, Stanley was reported by a spy to have been "busye in penning commodyes for the common players." He was also know to have travelled to Navarre, where *Love's Labours Lost* is set.

The Year 1616

What happened in Shakespeare's life and city during the year of 1616? Read on to find out the key moments of the year

Philip Henslowe dies

Henslowe's financial diary tells us much of what we know about early modern theatre practice. As a theatre entrepreneur, he built the Rose and Fortune playhouses and commissioned more than 300 plays. His son-in-law, Edward Alleyn, was the founder of Dulwich College.

Francis Beaumont dies

Beaumont's plays, mostly written in collaboration with John Fletcher, were hugely successful. Their working relationship reportedly extended to living arrangements and beyond, with "one Wench in the house between them [and] the same cloathes and cloak."

Miguel de Cervantes dies

Dying the day before Shakespeare, Spanish novelist and playwright Cervantes is best known for his *Don Quixote*, widely regarded as the world's first modern novel. His works captured the imagination of several English playwrights, including Shakespeare's now lost play, *Cardenio*.

Romeo + Juliet was released in 1996 and remains a popular modern adaptation of the classic tragedy

This funerary monument is located in Stratford's Church of the Holy Trinity where Shakespeare was both baptised and buried

THE GRAVE
OF THE POET
WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE
1564-1616

Shakespeare's grave in Stratford-upon-Avon. The city was the bard's birthplace and benefits from millions of tourists a year

Shakespeare was still working in London as an actor in 1608, and in 1609 he published 154 sonnets. It may have been the return of the plague later this year that made him retire to Stratford around this time. After 1610, he wrote fewer plays, and his last three were collaborations, probably with John Fletcher, who succeeded him as the house playwright of the King's Men.

Shakespeare died on 23 April 1616, aged 52, less than a month after signing his will. In it, he described himself as being in 'perfect health', leading to speculation that his death was sudden and unexpected. Half a century later, the vicar of Stratford John Ward wrote: "Shakespeare, Drayton and Ben Jonson had a merry meeting and, it seems, drank too hard, for Shakespeare died of a fever there contracted." This would correspond with responses from contemporary writers, one of whom wrote: "We wondered, Shakespeare, that thou went'st so soon/From the world's stage to the grave's tiring room."

William Shakespeare dies
In stark contrast to the gushing eulogies written for Richard Burbage, the principal actor of Shakespeare's company who died three years later, no such words of praise were recorded for the playwright himself. 400 years later, the reception may be quite different…

Ben Jonson's Folio is published
The Works Of Benjamin Jonson was the first collected folio edition of plays and poems published by any playwright. Jonson carefully cultivated his own legacy, with each page of the Works including lengthy explanatory footnotes.

Tang Xianzu dies
This Chinese playwright of the Ming dynasty was writing in a period that has come to be known as the second golden age of Chinese theatre. With an emphasis on musicality and song, many of his plays are still being performed on the Kun opera stage today.

The second version of Doctor Faustus is published
Christopher Marlowe's play about a scholar who sells his soul to the devil is famous. Lesser known is the fact it exists in two different versions. The 1616 text is longer, and probably amended by other playwrights including Samuel Rowley.

Shakespeare the heretic?

How evidence has indicated that the bard was a secret Catholic in a Protestant world

When Henry VIII broke from Rome, practicing Catholicism became a crime punishable by death. This was briefly reversed when Mary I, the Catholic daughter of Catherine of Aragon, came to the throne, but after her death, Elizabeth I reinstated Protestantism as the state religion. Initially Catholics were tolerated, but after a Papal Bull declared her a usurper, Elizabeth came to see the pope's followers as a major threat to the throne. Catholicism once again became equivalent to treason.

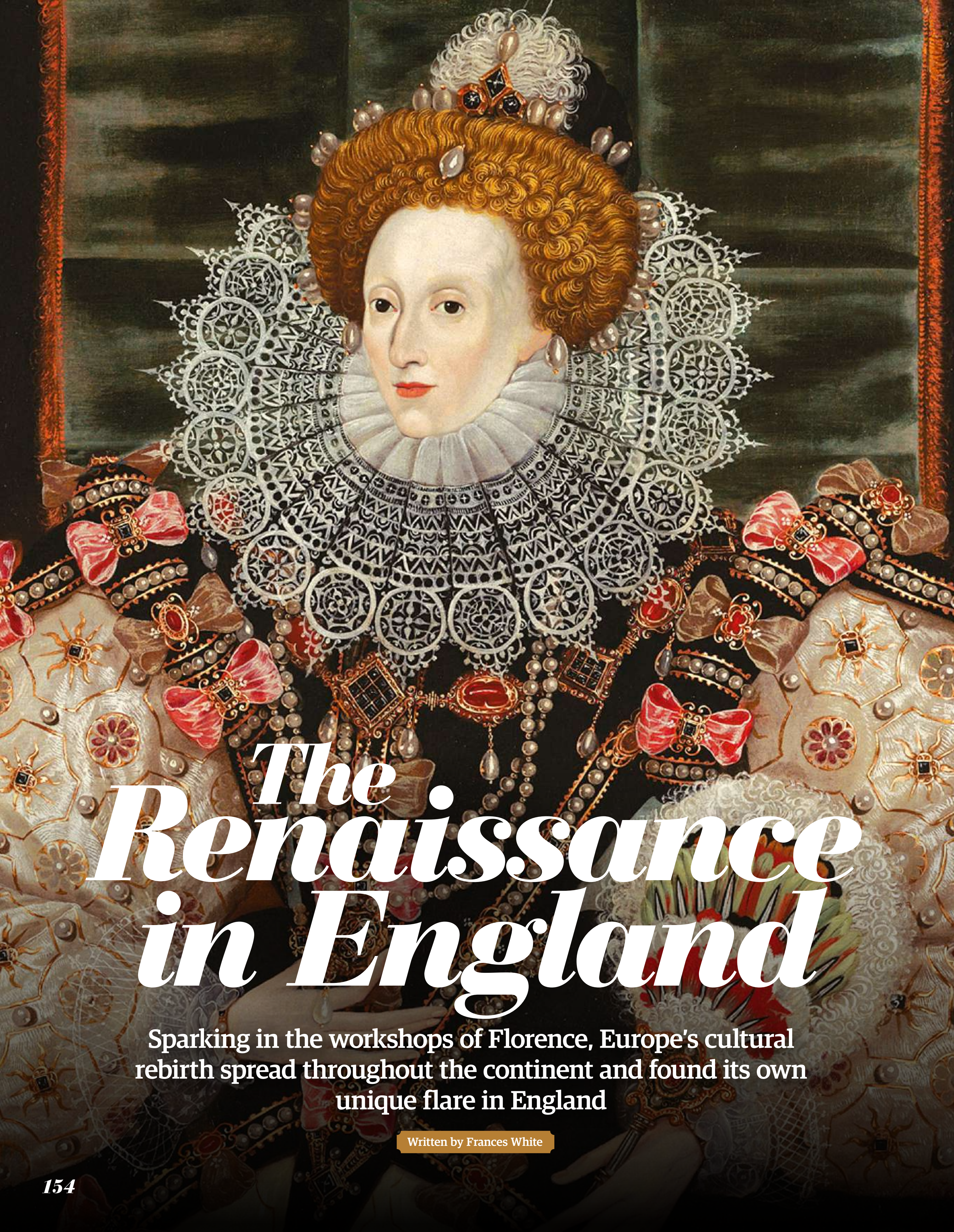
Though the direct evidence indicates that Shakespeare was a member of the Anglican Church, some scholars have claimed that Shakespeare's family had Catholic sympathies and that he himself was a secret Catholic. The strongest piece of evidence is a tract found in the rafters of the Shakespeares' old house believed to have been signed by John Shakespeare, in which he professes secret Catholicism (although this document has since been lost). Shakespeare's mother Mary was also believed to have been from a conspicuous Catholic family. Four of the six schoolmasters at the grammar school he attended were Catholic sympathisers and one of them later became a Jesuit priest.

This, along with evidence that Shakespeare worked as a servant in a Catholic family and travelled to Italy on pilgrimage, all suggest that he was indeed a heretic. Because of this, some have chosen to believe that his plays have hidden messages, using words like 'high' and 'light' when referring to Catholicism and 'low' and 'dark' when alluding to Protestantism. The truth, it seems, went with him to the grave.

He was survived by his wife and two daughters, and left most of his estate to Susanna, stipulating it should pass immediately to her first-born son. There is hardly any mention of Anne in his will, who would automatically have been entitled to a third of his estate, except to state that she should receive his "second best bed". Some see this as an insult, and further evidence their relationship was tepid at best, while others argue that this would most likely have been the matrimonial bed (the best bed reserved for guests), so a gesture of love.

On 25 March, Shakespeare had edited the will, following the revelation that his daughter Judith's husband Thomas Quiney had an illegitimate son with a woman called Margaret Wheeler, who died in childbirth in mid-March 1616. Thomas was ordered by the church court to do public penance, which would have caused much shame and embarrassment for the Shakespeare family. In the first bequest of the will there had been a provision "vnto my sonne in L[aw]"; but "sonne in L[aw]" was then struck out, with Judith's name in its place.

Shakespeare was buried in the chancel of the Holy Trinity Church in Stratford two days after his death, and some years later, a funerary monument was erected in his memory. In August 1623, Anne followed him to the grave. Later that year, the *First Folio* was published containing 36 of his plays, and though about 18 had been published prior to that, this was arguably the only reliable version. In its preface, Ben Jonson wrote: "He was not of an age, but for all time." Even then people were aware of the timelessness of Shakespeare's plays, and they continue to resonate with audiences around the world. They have been adapted for film and television, along with theatrical adaptations like those produced by the Reduced Shakespeare Company, who can perform all 37 of his plays in just 97 minutes. Shakespeare is also believed to have influenced the English language more than any other writer, coining – or at least popularising – terms and phrases that are still used in everyday conversation. His life may remain a mystery, but perhaps that is part of what makes his works as ethereally beautiful as we see them today.



The Renaissance in England

Sparking in the workshops of Florence, Europe's cultural rebirth spread throughout the continent and found its own unique flare in England

Written by Frances White

In January, 1504, perhaps the greatest work of art mankind had yet produced was about to be unveiled for the first time. The Vestry Board of Florence's Cathedral gathered in eager anticipation to see what the artist, Michelangelo Simoni, had been working on feverishly and in total secret for over two years. Standing at 14 feet, carved flawlessly out of pure white marble, *David* was revealed towering over them - it was unlike anything they or anyone had ever seen before. What they beheld was an anatomically perfect, if giant, reinterpretation of the biblical character, in tense preparation to fight Goliath - a metaphor of Florence's defiance and strength. Today we see one of the many treasures of the Renaissance, Europe's cultural rebirth.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, Florence was the unquestionable heart of the Renaissance. A city constantly steeped in fear, of invasion from foreign powers, as well as disastrous plagues, it was here that some of the foremost thinkers, artists and writers of the era would find patronage and inspiration for their work. Though throughout the Reformation the Italian cities remained deeply Catholic, this fear and constant reminder of life's frailty gave much of the art and literature in this era notable humanist traits.

In a break from medieval traditions, artists began to depict scenes with unprecedented realism, utilising light and dark to cast their figures in new and more-dramatic tones. For the first time the Virgin Mary, or the Madonna with child, actually appeared lifelike, bringing out her humanity to the observer. Biblical figures, in addition to characters from antiquity, were being brought to life in a way never seen before, in terms of their form as much as the new and more vivid colours artists could bring to their brush.

With a population of around 60,000 at the outset of the 15th century, Florence was a small, but by no means feeble city state. Twelve artist guilds chiefly led the city, monitoring and regulating the flourishing cloth and textile trade that brought in vast amounts of wealth. The city was also sporadically headed by one of several ruling families.

The most famous of these was Lorenzo de' Medici, who became the patron of some of Florence's most brilliant minds and artists, including Sandro Botticelli, the aforementioned Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci. This method of working under patronage would come to typify lives of many Renaissance artisans, who quickly found fame and fortune plying their skills for rich patrons and even royalty all over Europe.

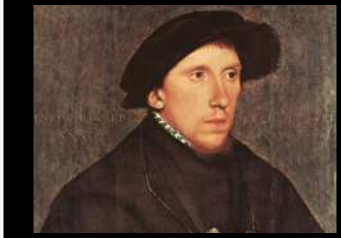
> "For the first time the Virgin Mary, or the Madonna with child, actually appeared lifelike, bringing out her humanity to the observer"

The ideas and ideals of the Renaissance were much slower to spread to England than elsewhere. While Botticelli was completing one of his most famous masterpieces in 1483 - 'Venus and Mars' - England was only just emerging from the latest clash of its bloody civil war. Botticelli's painting depicts a sleeping Mars, the classical god of war, and an alert Venus, the goddess of love. In England, at least, love and peace was restored after the coronation of Henry VII and his marriage to Elizabeth of York, uniting the two warring families and establishing the ruling Tudor dynasty.

In this new peace, patronage of the arts and the emerging mercantile class could thrive, rather than suffer under heavy investment in war. Though a printing press had been brought to England in around 1575, most of the population remained illiterate in the pre-Reformation state. However it would be Henry VIII's reign, beginning in 1509, that would truly see the Renaissance arrive in England. Henry was a huge admirer of art, architecture and a keen musician. Befitting a man of his status, he was well educated and was even an amateur alchemist, with his own personal collection of medicinal ingredients. In particular Henry's love of music, song and poetry spread throughout his court, and it was during his reign that the composer Thomas Tallis made his name.

Leading the Royal Choir, Tallis was a gifted singer and organist, appearing at Sunday Mass on a rotary basis. Though much of his earlier life is undocumented, he found great success under Henry's patronage and continued to serve in the Chapel Royal into Edward VI's, Mary I's and even Elizabeth I's reigns. During this time he worked within and composed for his choir, appearing at all state occasions such as funerals, weddings and christenings. Among one of his most famous works is 'Gaude Gloriosa Dei Mater' (Rejoice Glorious Mother of God), composed for a six-part choir and written possibly near the end of Henry VIII's reign, though symbolically it would have been popular

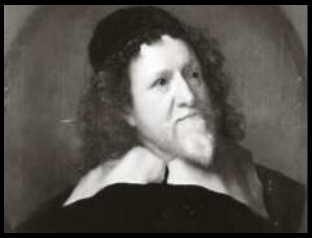
Key Figures



Henry Howard, Earl Of Surrey

A friend of King Henry VIII, Howard is considered to be among the foremost instigators of English Renaissance court poetry and the English sonnet form. Sharing his verse among a select coterie of friends at court, his work reflects on life, death and the ideals of living 'the happy life'. Howard rose in the royal graces after his first cousin, Anne Boleyn, married the king in 1533. Though he eventually fell from the king's favour and was executed in 1547 just days before the king's own death, for many Howard embodies the Renaissance spirit of the warrior, the scholar and the poet.

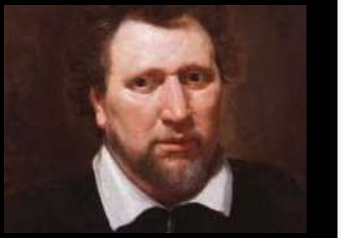
ABOVE: This portrait of Howard was produced by Hans Holbein The Younger, the king's royal painter



Inigo Jones

A highly skilled engineer and artist, Jones spent many of his formative years in Italy, where he absorbed much of the artistic styles brimming in Florence and elsewhere at the end of the 16th century. He gained fame and fortune first as a set and costume designer for King James I, where he worked on the court's extravagant court masques. Soon he was introducing the grandeur of Italian Renaissance architecture to England, working on renovations to St Paul's Cathedral, a new Banqueting House at Whitehall, and even the lavish Covent Garden estate in London, where he designed the capital's first square in the style of Italian piazzas.

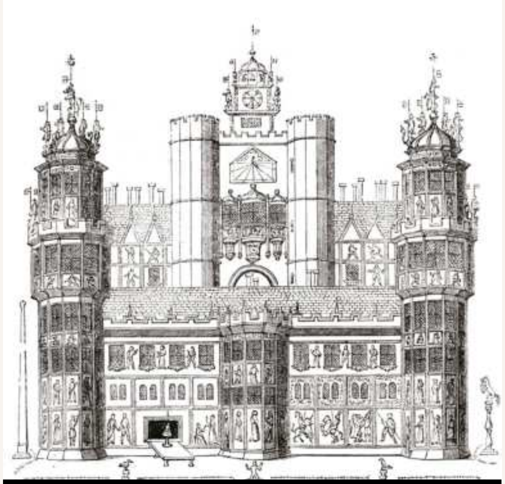
ABOVE: Jones was chiefly responsible for bringing Renaissance styles to London into the 17th century



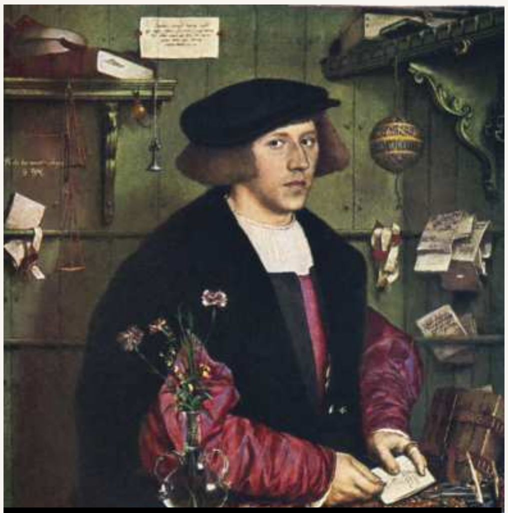
Ben Jonson

Jonson attended a Westminster elementary school at an early age, where he embarked on rhetorical and classical training, as well as lessons in Greek and Latin. A lack of funds forced him to return to his stepfather's trade as a bricklayer, but Jonson was driven to better himself and soon entered the world of the emerging Elizabethan theatres in Bankside. A friend and colleague of Shakespeare, Jonson became among the foremost literary critics and playwrights of his era. After gaining a royal pension shortly after the publication of his first folio he is even considered to be England's first ever poet laureate.

ABOVE: Jonson became not just a great poet and playwright, but also a fiery literary critic



Nonsuch palace was Henry VIII's great architectural project, where he displayed all his wealth and prestige, as well as brought continental styles to England



Among the most celebrated painters of Henry VIII's court, Hans Holbein was responsible for many of the famous portraits of the king and his courtiers

> "Encouraged by the king, Henry's court was brimming with literary talent, such as Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard"

during Mary I's reign, given the subject matter of the Virgin Mary.

Of course, like any egoist king, Henry was also enthusiastic about his own image and his status of power. He commissioned Nonsuch Palace in 1538 to rival the grand royal buildings seen in France at the time, introducing some of the first Renaissance architecture styles to the country. To design Nonsuch's grand facades, Henry employed Nicholas Bellin of Modena, who had previously been working for the king's great rival, Francis I of France. Bellin was chiefly responsible for the ornate slate carvings covering the building, each depicting classical scenes from antiquity. Henry's other grand building projects included his palaces at Greenwich, Hampton Court and Whitehall, which he spent vast fortunes on renovating and re-shaping to his own taste and to signify his power.

Inevitably all these grand buildings required fine artwork to fill them. Henry's taste in art varied, and he filled his halls with everything from historical battle scenes, to portraits of his ancestors, to iconic biblical imagery. In the 16th century, England had not yet produced a portrait artist of note to rival the brilliance of those emerging from the continent, so royal commissions for new masterpieces had to come from abroad. Antonio Toto and Pietro Torrigiani, both from Florence, each completed sculptures and furniture designs for the king, who was eager to surround himself in the latest splendour seen elsewhere in Europe.

However the most successful artist under the king's patronage was Hans Holbein The Younger, a German student of the humanist and philosopher Erasmus. Introduced to court by Anne Boleyn, Holbein served as the official royal painter from around 1532 until his death in 1543. He produced among the most enduring images of the king, as well as his courtiers, in many ways sparking an increased desire for the nobility to invest in the latest artistic talents from the continent.

Undoubtedly the most celebrated aspects of the English Renaissance are its writers. Thomas More, the king's Lord Chancellor, was among the foremost scholars in England in his time, writing translations of ancient texts, as well as his own poetry and a lengthy work of fiction called *Utopia*. Though he is celebrated as a gifted social philosopher and one of the Renaissance's foremost humanist writers, More was entirely against the Protestant Reformation and Henry's abolition of the monasteries, and it was for this that he was eventually executed in 1535.

Rather than published works, it was within the tradition of court poetry, with manuscript verse being passed between small groups of close friends, that some of the greatest advances in English literature took place. Encouraged by the king, Henry's court was brimming with literary talent, such as Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard. These noblemen are credited with establishing the form of the English sonnet, which would be picked up and adapted by the likes of Shakespeare, John

Timeline

1320

The Divine Comedy is completed
Dante Alighieri's epic poem recounts the journey of an unidentified traveller who makes his way through the seven levels of Hell. It is among the earliest examples of written Italian and considered one of the instigators of Renaissance writing.
c.1320

Adoration of the Lamb
Commissioned in the early 15th century, to brothers Hubert and Jan Van Eyck, the Ghent Altarpiece is a 12-panelled oil painting depicting several biblical scenes, as well as the central figures of John the Baptist, Christ and the Virgin Mary.
c.1432

The theory of art explained
Leon Battista Alberti completes his first of three treatises on art, 'De Pictura' (On Painting), in which he presents new theories of art and its place in the world. His book is read widely in Italy and elsewhere and is considered as being among the first works on art theory.
c.1435

Defining moment

The Gutenberg Bible is printed c.1455

German entrepreneur Johann Gutenberg first began experimenting with prototype printing press in around 1452, from his workshop in Mainz. Shortly after, in around 1455, he produced the very first printed bible. Though Chinese scholars had been mass-producing text centuries earlier, the Gutenberg Bible marked the birth of the printing press in Europe, enabling the distribution of books and pamphlets all over the continent. This meant ideas on faith, politics and art would spread faster and further than ever before.

The Last Supper
Perhaps Leonardo Da Vinci's most famous work, 'The Last Supper' is completed after three years of planning. His depiction of Christ and disciples is painted on the walls of the Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie near Milan.
1498

St Peter's Basilica is begun
Designed by several of the Old Masters of Italian Architecture, including Michelangelo, Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Raphael and Donato Bramante, the first stones of St Peter's Basilica in Rome are placed.
c.1506

The Temple
Whyt freres
Blak freres
Benams Castle
Parys Garden
The Bowll bayting
The Beare bayting
South warke
S Mary ouers

The Prince circulates
Niccolo Machiavelli's most famous work, *The Prince*, is completed. Dedicated to the new ruler of Florence, Lorenzo de Medici, the text is a philosophical analysis of how best to govern and even conquer principalities.
c. 1513

The Reformation begins
In Germany Martin Luther publishes his translation of the New Testament, making it available to be read outside of the church. This sparks the beginnings of the Reformation in Europe.
c.1522

Defining moment

Plutarch's Lives translated 1579

The Greek biographer Plutarch chronicled the lives of famous figures from antiquity, such as Caesar, Alexander the Great and Cleopatra. After its French translation was published in 1559, English scholar Thomas North first translated it into English in around 1579. This translation made Plutarch's work widely accessible, opening up the interpretation and adaptation of his stories into verse and onto the stage. There is evidence to suggest that North was at least acquainted with Shakespeare, who explicitly borrowed from Plutarch when writing some of his most famous plays, including 'Antony and Cleopatra'.

1599

Defining moment

Michelangelo's 'David' is born c.1504

After three-and-a-half years' work, Michelangelo's 'David' is finally unveiled on the Piazza della Signoria, Florence. The completely nude depiction of David was not only intended as homage to classical Greek and Roman sculpture, but also a personification of Florence itself. By the 16th century the fragile republic was on the verge of collapse, and the confident depiction of the youthful, confident David embodied a future renewal of the city itself, as well as its underdog status against the Goliath of foreign powers. On creating 'David', Michelangelo challenged perceived artistic convention by stating that he was 'removing' extraneous matter, until all that was left was David - in a sense uncovering the essence of the art from within the marble itself.

Human anatomy explained
Belgian physician Andreas Vesalius publishes among the first studies of human anatomy; 'De Humani Corporis Fabrica' (On the Fabric of the Human Body). His work is the first of its kind as it was based on studying human dissections, and observing the internal functions of the body.
1543

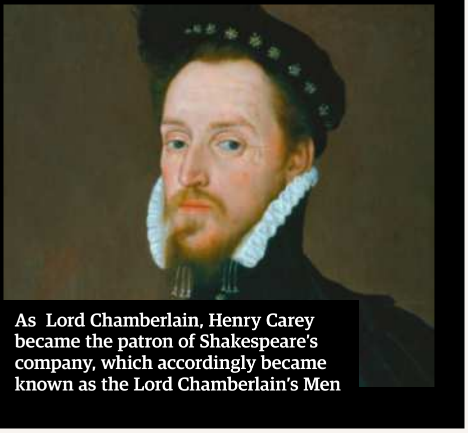
The Globe is built
Using the timber from an older theatre in north London, Richard Burbage and his company of actors, with assistance from craftsmen, begin building The Globe Theatre in Southwark, south of the river.
1599

Patronage in the Renaissance

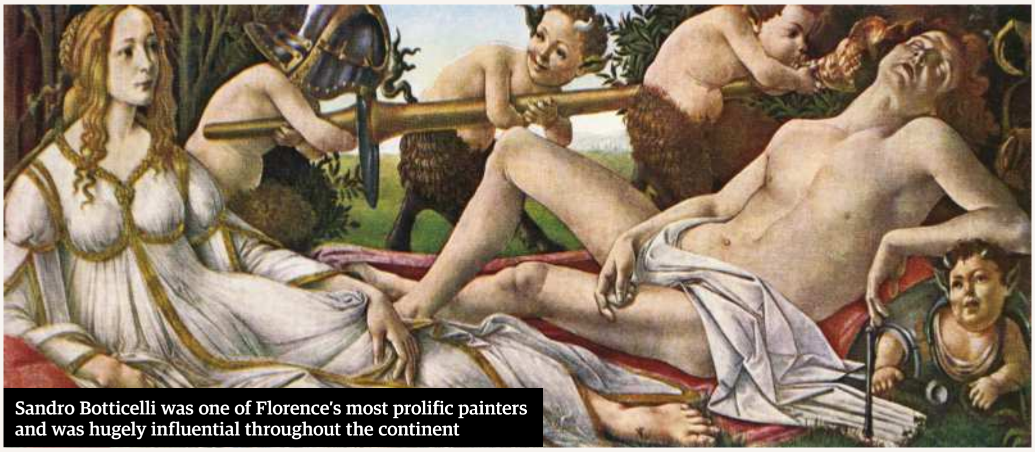
During the Renaissance period, royalty, nobility and even the increasingly wealthy merchant class all desired to possess the finest art to display their status. They also commissioned portraits of themselves and their family, to become 'immortalised' on canvas, dressed in their best clothes and even surrounded by mythological or religious iconography. Poets and writers also often found rich patrons to fund their work, who in return would receive plays and poems dedicated to them. Some writers would even live with their patron, serving as tutors to the family's children.

For many skilled artisans the ultimate patronage was that of a monarch, from whom the greatest accolades and financing was to be sought. Shakespeare's theatre company was initially patronised by Henry Carey, First Baron Hunsdon, and accordingly became known as the Lord Chamberlain's Men. After James I's ascension to the throne in 1603, the king patronised the company himself, thereby dubbing it The King's Men. Through this sponsorship the company went on to flourish, and in turn meant that the company could run more performances.

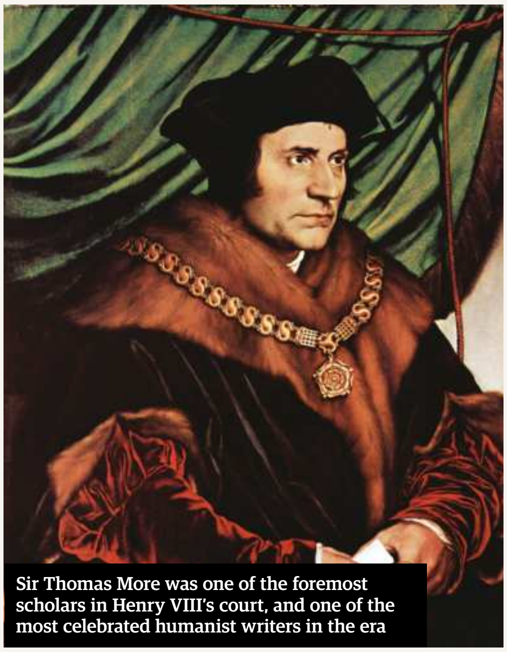
In Florence much of the work by some of the most famous humanists, scholars, artists and poets, was accommodated by Lorenzo de Medici, the de facto ruler of the city. Da Vinci, Botticelli, Angelo Poliziano, Michelangelo, to name just a few, all benefited greatly from the political connections, influence and power Lorenzo could lend them. Skilled artists were also regularly employed by the church. Michelangelo's 'David', for instance, was an original commission by the Cathedral of Florence, while da Vinci's 'Last Supper' was painted for the Santa Maria delle Grazie, in the city of Milan.



As Lord Chamberlain, Henry Carey became the patron of Shakespeare's company, which accordingly became known as the Lord Chamberlain's Men



Sandro Botticelli was one of Florence's most prolific painters and was hugely influential throughout the continent



Sir Thomas More was one of the foremost scholars in Henry VIII's court, and one of the most celebrated humanist writers in the era

Donne, Ben Jonson and others. The form follows a structure of three quatrains (groups of four lines) and a final rhyming couplet, usually completing a witty conceit or whimsical flourish.

Both men were constantly in and out of the king's favour, each being closely linked with Anne Boleyn; Howard was Boleyn's first cousin, while Wyatt was rumoured to have been her lover. As a result of his often-fluctuating fortunes, Howard's verse in particular reflects on life, death, and man's place in the world. Like much Renaissance literature on the continent, the sonnets of the Tudor court draw heavily from classical references, while including idealistic images of the natural world and man's natural state within it - rooted in the Renaissance humanist tradition. Similar to their counterparts in France and Italy, the poets of the Tudor court were also scholars, engrossed in the writers from antiquity such as Ovid and Homer.

If it can be said that Henry's reign saw the importing of the continent's Renaissance in art and architecture, then the Elizabethan era saw the rise of the great playwrights and poets England would soon come to celebrate. Like her father, Elizabeth was a gifted scholar, and had a passion for the arts. Her court was constantly filled with musicians and singers, while plays, or royal masques as they were called, also gained immense popularity.

In 1576 the first play house in London was opened in Shoreditch, just north of the city wall, by James Burbage, an actor turned businessman. Twenty-two years later in 1598 his son Richard, along with his acting company, would dismantle this playhouse, and transport it to Bankside, in Southwark, where it would be reconstructed as the Globe Theatre. Under the patronage of Henry Carey, First Baron Hunsdon, The Lord Chamberlain's Men playing company gave regular performances at The Globe and at Elizabeth's court.

During the latter part of the 16th century, London's population soared to well over 200,000 (a huge number at the time). As people travelled to the capital to seek their fortunes, some of the greatest writers and artists became inevitably drawn to the booming theatre scene of Bankside. As well as Shakespeare, Thomas Dekker, Ben Jonson, Samuel Daniel, Christopher Marlowe and

> "As people travelled to the capital to seek their fortunes, some of the greatest writers and artists became inevitably drawn to the booming theatre scene of Bankside"

others all found great success in the playhouses, where there even emerged a rivalry between playing companies and theatres.

Just as England's cultural Renaissance came much later than its continental cousins', so too did it begin its exploration overseas long after its rivals. While Spain in particular had been reaping the benefits found in the New World for decades, it wasn't until Francis Drake's expedition to circumnavigate the globe began in 1577, that England began to reap the benefits of overseas exploration. New, more efficient ship designs made vessels stronger, faster, and easier to handle. This made captains more daring and crews more willing to risk the vastness of the Pacific and beyond.

Spices, sugar and tobacco flooded into London, bringing with them the opportunity for even more profit, while gold stolen from Spanish treasure ships was returned from royally sanctioned privateer missions. New companies and businesses sprang up constantly, and new monopolies granted by Elizabeth created vast fortunes for the profit of London's merchants.

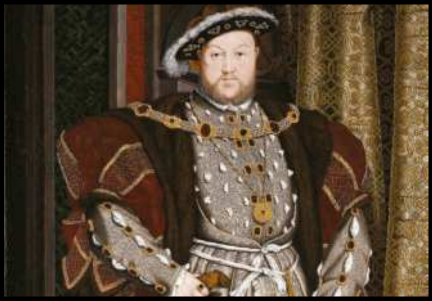
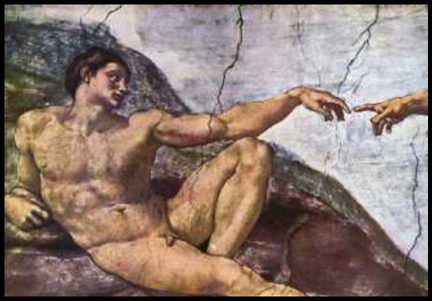
However, not every aspect of the Elizabethan Renaissance was fixed in the material world. The Queen's close advisor and personal astrologer Dr John Dee is one of the most celebrated and controversial scholars in the Elizabethan court. A brilliant mathematician, philosopher and alchemist, Dee struck a peculiar balance between science, magic and the divine in his work.

As new trade links with far-off Russia in the east and the Americas in the west were required, Dee's skills were called into service, using his knowledge of the night sky to help teach captains new methods of navigation. Dee was even consulted by Pope Gregory XIII, who introduced the Gregorian Calendar in 1582, though England would not adopt this until 1752.

The death of Elizabeth in 1603 marked the end of the Tudor era in England, and in many ways the end of its unique Renaissance. By the beginning of James I's reign, Europe was already beginning to change once again. As the Reformation spread, and Protestant states grew in power, a Catholic counter-reformation would eventually bring about the Thirty Years' War. As fighting and unrest ravaged the continent, funding turned from the arts and literature to arms and armies. In England, the arts would have their own unique struggle against increasingly powerful puritan elements in London, who in particular saw the play houses of Southwark as bawdy pits of vice. Soon a new civil war broke out, this time between parliament and the monarch, and the play houses were closed for decades. As it did some 200 years prior, the country would be irreversibly changed by war, and remade in its aftermath – another rebirth was at hand.

Europe's two Renaissances

How the movement differed in England and Mainland Europe

	England	Mainland Europe
		
Music	After the English Reformation, the place of music in church and in life changed dramatically. The leading composers of the Tudor were all connected inextricably with the church, or the royal court, or both. With the emergence of printed sheet music, the flow of compositions from the continent steadily grew more and more in popularity.	Groups of musicians on the continent could travel between territories much easier than their English counterparts, and would perform at royal courts and noble houses in several different countries. Franco-Flemish composers such as Josquin des Prez were incredibly popular in the early stages of the 16th century, and were still heavily influenced by Catholic mass.
Art	Many of the most famous painters to work in England were from the continent. For example Hans Holbein The Younger, a German artist, produced one the most famous portraits of Henry VIII in 1536. Henry also commissioned copies to be made of tapestries designed by Raphael, which had previously hung in the lower walls of the Sistine Chapel, in the Vatican.	Among the most celebrated sculptures, portraits and religious paintings that we now consider to typify the Renaissance, the majority grew out of the traditions and practices of Florence's artist guilds. Soon the Florentine school – as it became known – produced painters and sculptors that were eagerly sought after by all of Europe's nobility and royalty.
Architecture	As the most popular and sought-after architectural styles in the era were drawn from Italian influences, as with portraiture, many royal building projects commissioned Florentine craftsmen. It wasn't until much later, with the likes of Inigo Jones, that English designs, albeit with heavily Italian influence, were popularised in London.	Drawing from the ridiculously fertile crop of artistic talent from Florence and elsewhere, the rich and the powerful all commissioned the finest visionaries for their building projects. Much Renaissance architecture was typified by huge commanding domes and soaring pillars, in imitation of classical Roman buildings.
Literature	English courtly poetry thrived in the 16th century, with manuscript verse passed between small groups of close friends, establishing new trends in written English. Soon after the introduction of the printing press, literacy levels throughout the country soared, and London's theatres housed some of the Renaissance's most brilliant writers.	Interest and interpretation of classical writers such as Homer and Ovid, sparked a new trend of translation and re-invention across the continent. The foremost change to literature on the continent came with the production of the Gutenberg Bible, the first book to be mass-produced in Europe.
Medicine	Alchemy, quack doctors, even wise women and witches still made up the majority of medical authorities in Tudor England, which was a similar situation to the continent. Physicians were available for only the very wealthiest in society, and commonly they were immigrants from abroad, such as Dr Rodrigo López, Elizabeth I's personal physician.	Among the greatest advances in medicine and the studies of human anatomy came from the mainland. Though da Vinci was dissecting and analysing human bodies much earlier, his work was not used to further the understanding of surgery or physiology. Andreas Vesalius was among the first doctors to use dissection as a means to understand the human body.

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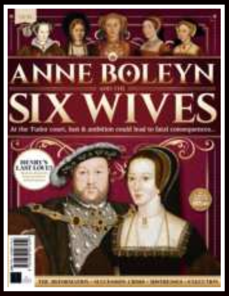
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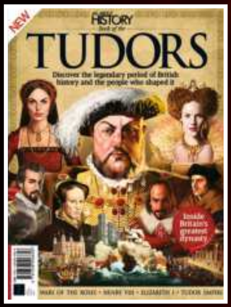

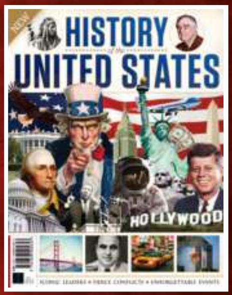
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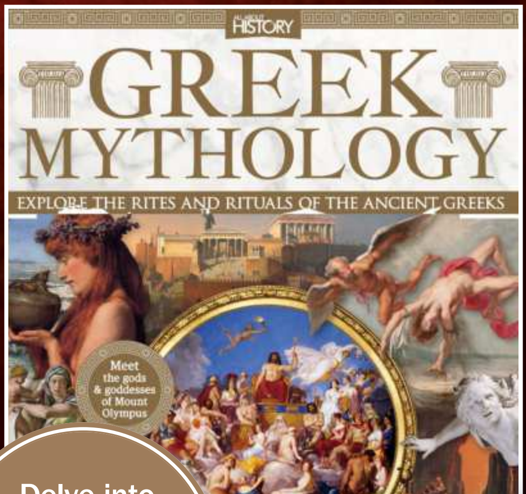
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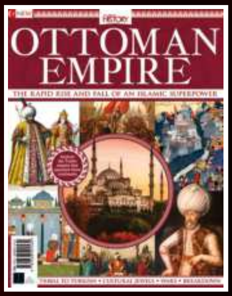
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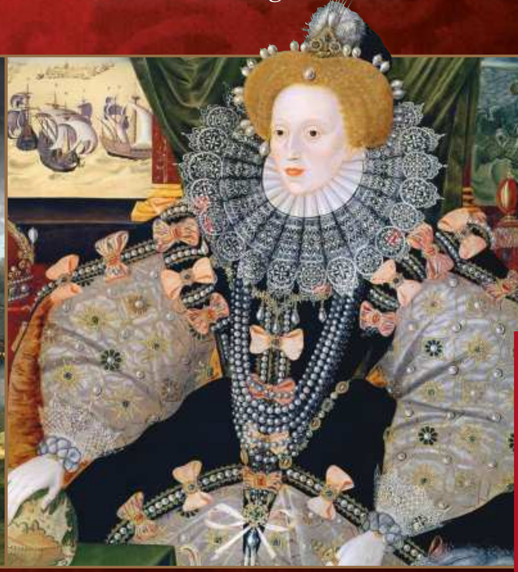

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